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\nDR WHO\n
\nAND THE DALEKS\n
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\nNovelisation by\n
\nALAN SMITHEE\n
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\nBased on the Aaru motion picture\n
\nwritten by Milton Subotsky\n
\nAdapted from the BBC television serial\n
\nby Terry Nation\n
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\nThere is always time for adventure...\n
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\nCHAPTER ONE\n
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\nThe Mysterious Dr Who\n
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\nThe old grandfather clock ticked away reassuringly in the corner of the rather old-fashioned sitting room. The clock, like most of the furniture and even the décor, had the look of having always been there, as if it just belonged in that delightful room, which clearly belonged to an earlier decade. The television – which was, as usual, turned off – was the only obvious indication that it was now the middle of the 1960s. To some people the old clock's ticking may have been a distraction but the three people in the room were, as was so often the case, engrossed in their reading and the clock was simply a reassuringly familiar sound in the background. \n
\nThe sound of home.\n
\nThe overflowing bookshelves placed against each wall of the room suggested that reading was the natural state of affairs in the house. \n
\nThe youngest of the three in the sitting room was a girl of around ten or eleven years old. She wore a neat checked pinafore and her fair, curly hair was pulled back into a short ponytail. She could have been any ordinary schoolgirl from London in 1965, except for the huge scientific book she was carefully reading her way through. Physics for the Inquiring Mind. The girl, whose name was Susan, had the look of someone who found the content of the book rather obvious and backward and who really hoped that the writer would pull himself together and progress to something more challenging before long.\n
\nSitting next to Susan was a young woman in her early twenties. Barbara was a slim, attractive girl who wore a bright red skirt and a favourite blouse. Her blonde hair was cut fashionably short. She was probably the only hint that the year was 1965 rather than 1925. Like Susan, Barbara was reading a hefty academic book, The Science of Science. She flipped a page, her eyes scanning the text, eager to learn more.\n
\nThe third figure in the room was hidden behind the most recent issue of the Eagle comic, in which Dan Dare and his sidekicks yet again took on the deadly Mekon to save Earth from certain destruction. The comic moved as the page was turned and the reader was revealed as an elderly man who could have been aged anything from fifty to ninety. His swept back hair and neat moustache were grey, and his clothing of a brown corduroy jacket over a tan waistcoat, blue necktie and dark brown trousers all suggested a man whose roots were sixty years earlier, but the blue eyes behind the ancient pince nez were bright and sparkled with life and mischief. However old his body claimed to be, the man's mind was young and vibrant. \n
\nHe was known only as Dr Who and he was the proud grandfather of both Barbara and Susan.\n
\n'Most exciting,' he said rather breathlessly, laying the comic down in his lap. 'Most exciting

indeed.’ He humphed in approval of the adventure he had just finished and lifted the comic again, ready for the next escapade.\n
\nThe grandfather clock chimed the hour and Barbara bolted to her feet after glancing at the dial. Clearly she had lost track of the time. ‘Goodness, Ian will be here in a moment.’ She hurried towards the door. ‘I must go and get ready.’\n
\nDr Who looked up from his comic, only half concentrating on his grand-daughter’s words. His mind was still full of Dan Dare’s deep space adventures. ‘Oh, who’s that?’ he asked.\n
\nBarbara smiled affectionately at the old man and joined him at his comfortable old chair. She kissed the top of the old man’s head. ‘Grandfather, I’ve told you about him dozens of times.’\n
\nSusan’s voice came from behind her book. ‘Her new boyfriend,’ she said sourly, moving the book aside to reveal an equally dour expression on her face. Clearly Barbara’s new man did not meet with Susan’s approval.\n
\nDr Who plucked the pince nez from his nose. ‘Oh, I look forward to meeting him,’ he said. ‘What’s his name?’\n
\nBarbara squeezed the old man’s arm fondly. ‘Ian,’ she repeated.\n
\nAs if on cue, someone rapped out a quick musical motif on the front door-knocker.\n
\n‘That’ll be him now,’ Barbara said, hurrying back to the door leading up a set of stairs to her bedroom. ‘Susie, be a dear and answer the door, would you?’\n
\nSusan scowled. She sighed in a way that again suggested she had little interest in Barbara’s love-life and that she really did have little time for this Ian. With a great show of reluctance, she put her book down and set off to answer the front door.\n
\n \n
\nIan Chesterton was not nervous.\n
\nAt least that was what he kept telling himself. He was not nervous about his date with Barbara, he was not nervous about meeting the grandfather she doted on and talked about regularly, he was not nervous that Barbara wouldn’t like the flowers he had bought (and that definitely wasn’t the reason he had bought chocolates as well) and most of all he was not nervous about the little monster Susan, who managed to constantly unnerve him by watching him as if he was a monkey in a zoo.\n
\nNo, he wasn’t nervous about any of that.\n
\nHe was going to keep telling himself that he wasn’t nervous about any of those things until he believed it.\n
\nAnd he wasn’t nervous that Barbara might just be a little bit out of his league. Ian knew that he wasn’t bad looking, he had a decent if dull job in a good office and he polished up pretty well. But Barbara was different. She was clever, funny and beautiful, and he knew that half of the chaps for miles around had set their eyes on her. Yet somehow, for some reason, she had picked him. Ordinary, slightly dull, occasionally clumsy and not nearly as confident as he liked to make out, him.\n

\nNo, he was not nervous.\n
\nNot much.\n
\nNot nervously at all, Ian quickly buffed the top of his shoes against the backs of his suit trousers, smoothed his hair and straightened his tie. Again.\n
\nHe leaned on the door and lifted the ornate door-knocker and rattled it, rapping a jaunty little tune to show some of the swagger he wished that he felt…\n
\n…and found himself toppling through the doorway as the door was suddenly pulled open. He stumbled forward, tripped on the welcome mat and smacked head first into a large barometer in the hall.\n
\n‘Glad you dropped in,’ Susan said, holding the door open. She grinned impishly and closed the door as Ian rubbed at his head, wondering how big the lump would be when it developed. With his luck it would probably be like something from a Tom and Jerry cartoon.\n
\n‘All right,’ he conceded. ‘So you caught me again.’ Yes, she had that look of a cat toying with a trapped mouse again. She always had that look when she saw him. He followed Susan through to the sitting room where a tall old man in a brown corduroy jacket and pince nez glasses was waiting.\n
\n‘Grandfather, this is Ian Chesterton,’ Susan said, indicating Ian, before heading back to the sofa and a huge science book. She smiled affectionately at her grandfather before disappearing behind the book. She had looked at the old boy with so much love that Ian wondered if maybe she wasn’t so bad after all.\n
\nThe old man pushed himself out of his chair. So this was the Dr Who Barbara talked about so much. He didn’t look much like a scientific genius. He seemed far more like one of the old buffers Ian saw pottering around town most days.\n
\nThe old lad extended his hand in a friendly manner. ‘I am so very glad to meet you at last,’ said Dr Who in a friendly, if very old fashioned, voice.\n
\nIan automatically held out his right hand in reply – and only realised too late that this was the hand holding a heart-shaped box of chocolates when Dr Who rather misjudged the gesture. ‘Oh, excuse me…’ Ian started.\n
\nHe was too late.\n
\n‘How extremely kind,’ Dr Who sounded both surprised and touched that Barbara’s young man might bring him such a gift. ‘Most thoughtful.’ He looked to Susan to point out this delightful act of kindness. \n
\nIan interrupted quickly to put the old fellow right. ‘They’re for Barbara,’ he said. ‘They’re her favourite kind. Soft centres.’\n
\nDr Who looked rather disappointed. ‘Oh, yes. Of course,’ he said and reluctantly released his grip on the chocolates. He looked around the rather old-fashioned living room. ‘Well, she was here a moment ago.’\n
\nIan dropped the chocolates onto a chair out of the way and looked around, too. Barbara had

called her grandfather a doctor, an inventor and a genius. He had expected… what had he expected? A man who looked like the boffins he saw on television? Maybe someone resembling that Professor Quatermass who had terrified him when he was younger. Or a Professor Nightshade or Professor X type character? A neat suit, perhaps? A white laboratory coat? He had expected the house to be something like a laboratory with lots of glass and metal. Instead, the room had solid wooden sideboards, tables and bookcases. The sofa and chairs had seen plenty of use. It was just a lovely average, lived-in room that was full of memories, with an average, slightly dotty old man living in it.\n
\nA dotty old man who was getting over his disappointment at the loss of the chocolates and remembering that he should be a good host. ‘Well, er, never mind,’ he said. ‘Why don’t you sit down while you’re waiting for her?’ Dr Who waved a hand at the comfortable looking chairs and Ian dropped into one.\n
\nThe crunch of cardboard and plastic from under his rear end took Ian by surprise and he leaped back to his feet. What had once been a heart shaped box filled with chocolates was now a crushed and crumpled mess. \n
\nSo much for the surprise gift of chocolates for Barbara.\n
\n‘Oh...’ he said. \n
\n‘Soft centres?’ Dr Who patted Ian’s arm sympa-thetically. ‘Well, never mind.’\n
\nIan knew that he sounded appallingly disappointed. And he really was. He liked Barbara a great deal and he had desperately wanted to make a good impression on her and on her family. He fell back on the confident, jovial façade he projected. The one that hid any insecurities. ‘Plenty more where that came from.’ He shifted across to the next chair and started to sit.\n
\nDr Who’s eyes went wide with panic. ‘No! Wait!’ the old man gasped out desperately.\n
\nIan leaped upright again, startled by Dr Who’s sudden alarm. ‘What is it?’\n
\nWith remarkable speed the old lad moved around behind Ian and plucked a complex looking little piece of carefully-tooled machinery from behind Ian. It had been half covered by a newspaper on the chair he had almost dropped into. ‘A super-ionised electro-kinetic pre-oscillator,’ said Dr Who as if that explained absolutely everything. Which, being fair, it did to everyone in the house with the exception of Ian. ‘And you nearly sat on it.’ Dr Who eyed the component carefully and with obvious pride. ‘Years of research work have gone into this. It’s part of my new invention.’ Talking of his work had animated the old chap and given him a real burst of energy. He was looking at Ian with an excited twinkle in his eye. ‘Would you like to see it?’\n
\n‘Well…’\n
\nThat was encouragement enough for Dr Who. He ushered Ian towards the back door. ‘Come on. Come on, I’ll show you.’\n
\nSusan had set down her book and joined them. ‘He wouldn’t understand,’ she said with what Ian thought was far too close to a sneer for someone so young.\n
\nDr Who shook his head briefly. ‘Anyone can understand science if they only put their minds to

it,' he said. 'You can.'\n
\nSusan wrinkled her nose in disdain. 'Well, that's different.' What she meant was very clear. She was different from Ian – and by that she meant that she was much more intelligent.\n
\nDr Who clearly read that message in his grand-daughters words, too, and tried to smooth them over. 'Oh, well, let's give Harold a chance.'\n
\n'Ian,' Susan corrected.\n
\nDr Who frowned in confusion. 'I beg your pardon?'\n
\nBest not to offend a grand-father I'm trying to impress, Ian thought, so he summoned his friendliest smile. 'Yes, my name's Ian, Dr Who.'\n
\nDr Who grasped Ian's hand and shook it warmly again as if he was working the handle on a water pump. 'Oh! How do you do?' he said in a friendly voice before reaching for the back door. 'Yes, yes, well, come along, then. Come along.'\n
\nSusan dropped a scarf around her grandfather's shoulders and handed him a pair of woollen gloves. 'Don't forget these.'\n
\n'Thank you, Susie. Off we go.' Dr Who pulled the door open and Susan hurried out into the garden. 'After you, erm...' he fumbled for the name for a moment before giving up and settling for just ushering Ian out of the door. 'Yes, right.'\n
\nThe garden was a beautifully tended enclosed square with mature bushes and flowers. Among his other talents, Dr Who was clearly a gifted gardener. Which did make Ian wonder what in the world a Metropolitan Police Box was doing sitting slap-bang in the middle of the lawn. Then again, he had also been wondering what kind of name "Dr Who" was.\n
\n'There,' said Dr Who. He was positively glowing with pride and excitement. 'My latest invention.'\n
\nThe old man was indeed holding out a hand to indicate the Police Box. \n
\nIan was genuinely bemused and wondered if there was something slightly wrong with Dr Who. Perhaps he needed to see a different kind of doctor? 'What, a police box?'\n
\n'Of course not!' Susan sounded utterly outraged.\n
\nThere was a strange, faraway, almost euphoric look in Dr Who's eyes. 'This is Tardis.'\n
\n'Tardis?' Ian repeated. What was that? It sounded Greek to him. Was it somewhere Cliff Michelmore or Alan Whicker had been to for the BBC?\n
\nSusan suppled the explanation. 'It's an acronym. It stands for Time And Relative Dimension In Space.'\n
\nIan had no idea what any of that meant but it was so he opted for a non-committal 'Oh'.\n
\nDr Who wasn't put off in the slightest by any lack of enthusiasm from his guest. 'Go inside,' the old man said, pointing towards the door marked with a St John's Ambulance crest. 'Go on.'\n
\nIan was unsure. Who knew what could be lurking inside the little box? Junk? A savage dog? Homing pigeons? Maybe they kept chickens in it like his gran did "in case there's another war"? Whatever they had in there it certainly wouldn't be a policeman. What kind of oddball would build

a replica Police Box in his garden and give it a fancy name? He started to wonder if Barbara was just being too kind when she spoke so highly of her grandfather. As far as Ian could see, the old lad was affable but definitely a bit... eccentric. ‘Yeah?’ he asked, unsure of quite what to say.\n
\nDr Who nodded encouragingly. ‘Mm.’ \n
\nSusan just grinned like a cheeky little imp.\n
\nThat did it. Ian had had enough of Susan being so superior. He would look inside, play along with their game, then just get away for a nice evening at the pictures with Barbara.\n
\nHe opened the door and stepped into the impossible.\n
\nThe room around him was at least as big as the entire interior of an average house. The white walls were covered with mechanical equipment he couldn’t begin to understand. Cables and wires ran from panel to panel making dials twitch and lights flash. The low but steady hum of electrical equipment was a constant noise added to by a percussion of pings and bleeps from the various instruments.\n
\nIt was obviously utterly impossible.\n
\nIan stepped out and looked in shock at the exterior again. It still looked like a perfectly ordinary Police Box of the kind he had seen on street corners all over London. He had even seen one when he and Barbara had taken a walk on Barnes Common on that foggy night the previous weekend. He walked all the way around it. The police box was a square box of maybe four and a half feet wide by the same deep and about seven and a half feet tall. How in the world could it be so large on the inside? \n
\nIt had to be an illusion, surely?\n
\nDespite himself, Ian found that he was walking back into Tardis. This time he heard Dr Who and Susan follow him and saw the girl close the door behind them. He turned to Dr Who, who had taken a seat in a comfortable looking rocking chair. ‘But it’s so big in here and yet it’s so small from outside. How come?’\n
\nIan’s curiosity obviously delighted Dr Who, and the old man leaned forward to explain. \n
\nSusan beat her grandfather to it. ‘In electro-kinetic theory, space expands to accommodate the time necessary, to encompass its dimensions.’ The terrible thing to Ian’s ears was that the girl sounded as if she understood every word she had said.\n
\n‘My little fellow scientist,’ said Dr Who proudly. Clearly Susan had been spot on with her explanation which had sounded to Ian like a random set of words thrown together to make an even more random sentence which he hadn’t even begun to understand.\n
\nDr Who cast his eyes around the inside of Tardis, obviously taking in every sight and sound, and clearly aware of the precise purpose of every piece of equipment in his invention. ‘We’ve been working on Tardis for many years.’ The rocking chair tipped forward and Dr Who was back on his feet. He held up the little piece of machinery Ian had almost sat on just a few minutes earlier. ‘This is the final component.’ He moved to a bank of apparatus and slotted the component into position, securing clasps and sockets into its surface. ‘You are privileged, young

man, to be the first visitor to our time and space machine.’ \n
\nTime and space machine? Again, Ian recognised the words but he couldn’t make sense of them as a sentence. Not a sentence that was in any way plausible anyway.\n
\n‘There.’ Dr Who turned away from securing the component and returned to the centre of Tardis. ‘I can now set the controls for anywhere in time and space that we wish to go.’ He pointed at a large lever, shaped rather like the pilot’s controls of an aeroplane. attached to both the ground and a computerised bank of controls behind it. ‘When I push that lever, this room and everything in it will dissolve into their respective component electrical charges,’ the old fellow explained as if lecturing a class of physics students. ‘We’re all made up of them. These charges will then be transferred in time and space and reassembled in their proper order and their proper place.’ He paused and waited for Ian’s response.\n
\nIan response was to wonder how to get out of there as quickly as he could. Dr Who was talking about travelling in time and space. It was impossible. It was like something from Flash Gordon or that Rod Taylor film he’d seen a few years before. It was nonsense and he just wanted away from the place. It might be an idea to get Barbara and Susan away too. He probably should send the police round as well. He started sidling towards the door. ‘Er, well, I think I ought to be, er...’\n
\nBefore Ian could get near to them, the doors opened and Barbara walked in, smiling broadly. ‘Oh, I thought you’d all be in here.’ She smiled warmly at Ian. ‘Hello, darling.’\n
\nIan was flustered. He wanted away from this impossible place and he wasn’t prepared for Barbara throwing her arms around his neck to kiss him. ‘Hello,’ he mumbled \n
\nAs he caught her, Ian stumbled back half a step into the control lever Dr Who had just pointed at. His weight pushed the lever back as far as it would go.\n
\nThere was a strange whooshing sound and the lights flashed just a little. \n
\nAs he disentangled himself from a confused Barbara’s embrace, Ian was acutely aware that everyone was looking him in a mixture of shock and horror.\n
\n‘Young man,’ said Dr Who breathlessly, ‘do you know what you have just done?’ He pointed at the control lever Ian had leaned against. ‘You have transferred us in time and space and I haven’t even set the controls. Now I don’t know where we are. We could be anywhere in the universe and at any time!’ A huge smile spread across Dr Who’s face, wiping away the years and making him younger and full of life. ‘It’s rather exciting, isn’t it?’\n

\nCHAPTER TWO\n
\n \n
\nThe Dead Planet\n
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\nIan Chesterton had already had quite enough of whatever game Dr Who and his family were playing. Okay, he was very fond of Barbara but this was just a bit too weird and too bizarre for Ian's liking. He tried to force some common sense back into things. 'Look, I don't know how you do the magic with the inside of this room, but as far as being somewhere else in the universe...'\n
\nDr Who ignored Ian's protests. He slung what looked like a binocular case around his neck and headed for the door. 'Let's see where we are.'\n
\nDr Who opened the door.\n
\nAgain, what lay outside was quite impossible.\n
\n\nSusan was the first to follow her grandfather out onto the arid, dusty ground outside of Tardis. 'Grand-father, where are we?' She was immediately looking around, keen eyes full of curiosity and eager to explore. They seemed to have arrived in some kind of forest with grey, unhealthy trees reaching up from a dry, ashen ground towards a sky streaked with sickly green clouds. Susan ran towards the nearest trees.\n
\n'Susan, dear, don't go too far yet,' Dr Who called after her before kneeling to inspect the soil. Dry, charred and reduced to cinders, it slid through his fingers. \n
\n'There must have been a forest fire,' Ian suggested. He had really just wanted to say something that made sense. It was clearly impossible that the Police Box had moved to another world but he couldn't deny the evidence of his own senses. He had touched the trees, felt the sand move under his feet, and smelled the dust in the slightly stale air. Impossible as it was, the impossible Police Box had moved somewhere else entirely.\n
\nDeep in thought, Dr Who looked at the soil and then at the sickly trees and shrubs surrounding them. 'The heat must have been indescribable. It's turned the earth into ashes.'\n
\nIan followed Dr Who's gaze to the nearest tree. 'Oh, well, the soil can't be that bad,' he said. 'It still grows these shrubs and trees.' He leaned a hand on a branch to emphasise his point. 'Look at that.'\n
\nThe branch cracked loudly and snapped off from the tree, pitching Ian onto the dusty ground with a yelp. He leaped to his feet and picked up the branch. To his surprise it felt like stone rather than any part of a tree.\n
\nDr Who touched the tree, a frown of concentration furrowing his already wrinkled brow. He looked at the trees, at the ground, the foliage… 'A petrified jungle!' he said. The excitement was beginning to mount in him again now that he could see Ian was unharmed. 'How interesting.' He moved to another tree and caught a thin branch between his thumb and forefinger. He rubbed

gently and a trickle of fine stone sand trickled to the ground. ‘This is most interesting.’\n
\nIan was finding it less interesting than his older companion. ‘Well, if it’s all the same to you, sir, perhaps we could be making our way home now?’ he asked hopefully. \n
\n‘Hmm?’ The old man was horrified by the suggestion. ‘What, and miss the chance of learning something about an unknown planet?’\n
\nSusan wasn’t impressed either. ‘Coward,’ she said sourly. ‘I for one am going to investigate,’ she declared grandly. ‘Come on, Grandfather.’\n
\nDr Who hurried after his grand-daughter. ‘I’m coming, darling.’ He weaved his way through the petrified forest in Susan’s footsteps. The old fellow was absorbing every piece of information he could see, smell or touch. A single leaf remained on a withered branch. ‘Fascinating,’ he breathed. ‘Abso-lutely fascinating.’\n
\nIan and Barbara exchanged a look. Neither of them was as excited by their new surroundings as their companions. It was alien, it was a planet who-knew-where in space and time and if the dead forest and the ghoulish sky were anything to go by, the planet must have been destroyed by some cataclysm. Despite their concern, they followed Susan and Dr Who.\n
\nSusan’s voice came from a little way ahead. ‘Grandfather, look at this!’\n
\nIan and Barbara moved swiftly through the forest and found Susan kneeling in the sand a few feet to the side of a tree. Her grandfather stood nearby, peering at the ground with an infectious curiosity. Everything interested him.\n
\n‘What is it?’ asked Dr Who.\n
\n‘Look at this.’ Susan had found a startlingly brightly coloured flower. Its broad wide petals were a deep crimson and stood out vividly against the grey of the forest and that constant green glow of the clouds.\n
\nThe discovery clearly intrigued Dr Who, who hunkered down for a closer look. ‘By jingo!’ he said, ‘that looks like a... looks like a tulip.’\n
\n‘It’s a Lilium philadelphicum,’ Susan said confidently.\n
\n‘Is it now?’ Dr Who beamed at his grand-daughter’s show of knowledge. ‘It’s a Lilium philadelphicum, is it?’ He pushed himself back upright on creaking old knees and wandered away to continue his investigation of the area.\n
\nSusan had very carefully plucked the flower from the ground. Its stem had given way beneath ground level. She held it carefully and showed it to Ian. He took it from her, tenderly holding the beautiful but fragile flower. In the middle of all the devastation it positively shone. It was probably the most gorgeous flower he had ever seen. He realised that he was sharing Susan’s rapt smile, and for the first time he began to understand the girl’s wonder at, and love for, science.\n
\nThe moment was shattered as Barbara’s startled scream echoed through the forest. ‘Ian!’\n
\nIan thrust the flower back into Susan’s hands. He scrambled to his feet and ran in the direction from which Barbara’s scream had come.\n
\nSusan stared at the crumbling remains of the flower in her hand before throwing it aside and

running after Ian towards Barbara’s cries.\n
\nIan found Barbara by a tree. She was standing stock-still, refusing to move. Initially he thought it was fear that had frozen her but he followed her line of sight. Ahead of her was the most fearsome beast he had ever seen. It was the height of a grown Alsatian dog but had the breadth of a Rottweiler. It had reptilian, almost metallic, skin which seemed to shine unnaturally. The head reminded Ian of the dinosaurs he had seen in books, and that was reinforced by the protective fanned collar around the beast’s neck. It was, without a doubt, the most terrifying thing he had seen in his life. \n
\nSlowly, so as not to agitate the monster, Ian reached out his hand to gently grip Barbara’s arm as he pulled her away from the tree. ‘Slowly,’ he breathed.\n
\nBarbara slid her feet through the sand, inching towards Ian. He was certain that the beast would leap at any moment and he was ready to stand between the creature and Barbara. Finally, she was behind him and he could focus his attention entirely on the animal. \n
\nHe realised that something wasn’t quite right about the beast.\n
\nIn all the time he and Barbara had been at the tree, the animal hadn’t moved. Ian wondered if its terrifying appearance could just be for show. Its eyes weren’t moving. It was so still it didn’t even seem to be breathing. If it was more timid than its appearance suggested Ian might be able to frighten it off. He slowly picked up a fallen branch. It started to crumble in his hand but it would be sturdy enough to poke the animal hard a few times. He began to inch forward.\n
\n‘Be careful,’ Barbara whispered.\n
\nIan took another half step forward. \n
\nThe creature still didn’t move. It didn’t flinch.\n
\nAt that moment he heard the sound of footsteps crashing through the crumbling trees, cracking branches off as they came. In the corner of his eye he saw Dr Who and Susan hurrying to their position. Dr Who tried to stop suddenly as he saw the horrific creature but the sand was loose under his feet and he bumped into Barbara. She lurched and put her hand against the nearest tree.\n
\nIan heard the crack from above his head but before he could look up the great weight of a falling branch landed on his back sending him lurching forward. He stumbled, sprawling straight into the beast that had so terrified him and Barbara. They went down in a crashing heap of dust. It took him a long moment to realise that the animal has crumbled as he landed on it. Like the trees, the animal had been petrified and turned to stone. All that had been left was a shell. The strange effect of the skin had been because the metallic-looking flesh had been calcified to stone.\n
\nAnd now it was a pile of broken stone and dust.\n
\nBarbara hurried to his side. ‘Oh, Ian! Are you all right?’\n
\nDr Who was close behind, a concerned expression on his face. ‘Nothing broken, lad?’\n
\n‘No,’ Ian answered quickly, eager to set their minds at ease. He picked up a piece of the

animal’s broken, hollow shell. ‘It was another soft centre.’\n
\nIan could sense the relief from his companions. Barbara beamed her delight that he was safe, Dr Who offered a hand to help him rise and even Susan gave a kindly smile before she wandered away to continue her own exploration.\n
\nDr Who put a hand under Ian’s arm and helped him to his feet. ‘Well, come and sit over...’ The scientist looked around and spotted a large tree trunk which had long since fallen to the ground. ‘Look, over here. That will do admirably.’ \n
\nIan let himself be led to the log and sank down onto it to catch his breath.\n
\n‘There we are.’ Dr Who gave Ian a cursory examination and Ian wondered if Barbara’s grand-father actually was a real doctor – a proper, medical doctor. He didn’t much fancy being given a medical by a doctor of economics or theology or anything like that. Still, Dr Who did seem to know what he was doing and he looked satisfied that his patient was quite safe and would recover in no time. The old man turned and looked sadly at the crumbling remains of Barbara’s monster. ‘We shall never know what that was, will we, Susie?’\n
\nHis grand-daughter’s reply came from a little further forward. She was obviously excited about something and Dr Who ran towards her. With little choice, Ian and Barbara reluctantly abandoned their log seat and followed.\n
\nSusan was pointing through a gap in the trees, her eyes were wide with delight. ‘Grandfather, look!’\n
\n‘What have you found this time?’ he asked affably.\n
\nSusan pointed again. ‘Look!’\n
\nDr Who’s gaze followed Susan’s pointed finger. Through a gap in the forest he could see metal. Huge regular, geometrical metal shapes intelligently arranged in order. ‘Upon my soul!’ he breathed. ‘A city!’ He quickly pulled a powerful pair of binoculars from their case and trained them on the metal shapes. ‘But how extraordinary! A huge city!’\n
\n‘Can you see any people?’ Susan asked excitedly.\n
\n‘No,’ Dr Who reported as he swept the binoculars across the distant metal buildings. There was no hint of motion visible. ‘No one at all.’ He moved to look at another building. ‘No life, no movement.’ He handed the binoculars to Susan. ‘Here.’\n
\nShe took them eagerly and began peering at the city for herself. ‘Thank you.’\n
\nPerching his pince-nez back on the bridge of his nose, Dr Who stared at the distant city. ‘Can you see anyone?’\n
\n‘No,’ Susan replied. ‘Nobody.’\n
\nTaking the binoculars back from his grand-daughter, Dr Who was buzzing with excitement. ‘Let’s investigate.’\n
\nSusan’s enthusiasm matched his. ‘Oh, yes, let’s!’\n
\n \n
\nTheir eagerness to explore was not matched by either Ian or Barbara, who lagged several

yards behind the other half of their party. Barbara shivered and looked around the dead forest. She could sense something about the jungle, the whole planet. It was like a sixth sense. She just knew it. Sometimes she could sense things. She could never put it into words but the feeling was rarely wrong. ‘Something terrible happened here,’ she said. ‘This place is dangerous. I can feel it. I wish we could leave.’\n
\nIan was quick to agree. ‘Well, you don’t have to convince me.’ He took Barbara’s hand and led her to join her grandfather. ‘Er, Dr Who. I think we should get out of this place.’\n
\nThe old man’s finger pointed out in the direction of Susan’s discovery. ‘But look, Susan’s just found a city,’ his voice rang with excitement. ‘Wouldn’t you like to explore it first?’\n
\nIan had no wish to disappoint the old fellow. He seemed like a decent chap, but this situation was… well, it was impossible. It was an impossible alien world where everything was dead and fossilised. It was all just impossible and Ian wanted to get back into that impossible Police Box and go home to his sensible life and a normal date with Barbara where they could see a film, have fish and chips and forget about this madness. He was, at least, heartened that she agreed with him. Still, the innocent sense of excitement in Dr Who’s eyes made it hard to disagree with the old fellow. ‘Erm, well,’ Ian flustered, ‘they’re expecting me at home.’ It sounded pathetic and the look of disappointment that passed between Susan and Dr Who made him flounder even worse. ‘They… They’ll be wondering where I am. I... I think we should go back.’\n
\n‘Aww…’ Susan was clearly winding up to say something and Ian prepared for a zinger of an insult but Dr Who gently interrupted the girl.\n
\n‘Oh, well, if we must,’ the old man said.\n
\nIan breathed a heartfelt sigh of relief. ‘Oh, thank you,’ he said, taking Barbara’s hand.\n
\n‘You lead the way back,’ Dr Who called to them. \n
\nIan and Barbara turned and started walking back through the petrified forest, carefully avoiding the low-lying branches. Had they looked back, they might have seen Dr Who give Susan a conspiratorial wink before glancing back at the city. A broad smile appeared on the girl’s face as she and her grandfather set about meandering through the forest after their companions.\n
\nNo matter what her grandfather had said to Ian and Barbara, Susan obviously knew that Dr Who had no intention of leaving this planet until he had investigated her city.\n
\n \n
\nSusan was the most reluctant of the four travellers to return to Tardis. The city had been her discovery. So had the flower Ian had crushed. She had been saddened to see the flower destroyed but she quite liked that Ian had been so worried about Barbara. She just wished that he was a bit less… well… dull.\n
\nHe had put himself between Barbara and that monster though, so Ian obviously wasn’t a coward. He was just… safe. \n
\nAnd safe was dull, especially when there was a city – and a whole planet – to be explored. Whatever her grandfather had in mind, Susan hoped that he would put the plan into action

quickly. She just couldn't wait to investigate that gleaming metal city and meet whatever alien life forms created it.\n
\nSusan had become so caught in her own thoughts that she hadn't realised that she had become detached from the rest of her party. Dr Who and the others must have been quite some way in front of her. They were well out of sight and their voices had become too distant for Susan to hear their words as anything more than low, indistinct snippets of conversation.\n
\nBut she wasn't alone.\n
\nSomehow Susan knew that she was not alone in that part of the dead forest. There was a sensation at the back of her neck. She was being watched. She was sure of it. Like Barbara she had always possessed a sixth sense for danger. \n
\nWas it one of those creatures Barbara had found? If the planet could produce a monstrous thing like that, what else might have evolved here? She didn't know but she knew for sure that something was watching her.\n
\nSusan backed away, looking for the security of a tree at her back. Instead she felt a touch on her shoulder. She turned instinctively, expecting to see a branch. Instead she saw the long, strong fingers of a powerful hand on her shoulder.\n
\nShe screamed and ran, breaking away from the hand and crashing through the forest, bursting through branches rather than slowing herself by running round them. \n
\nShe looked back. \n
\nThere was nothing.\n
\nShe had to keep running.\n
\nRun faster.\n
\nThe ground was soft. Her feet sank into it.\n
\nIt didn't matter.\n
\nShe had to keep running. \n
\nKeep running.\n
\nShe looked back again. She didn't see anything.\n
\nThat meant she didn't see the solid form of Ian Chesterton when she ran straight into him. Her arms flailed and she kicked out at him, trying to break free of the arms that had caught her.\n
\n'Hey, hey, hey!' Ian protested. 'It's me, it's me, it's me!'\n
\nSusan's panic slowly subsided as she recognised the familiar figure, who was looking at her with genuine concern. She threw herself at Ian and hugged him more tightly than she ever thought she could. He was dull and he was safe but at that moment "dull and safe" sounded perfect to Susan.\n
\n'We have to get back to Tardis,' she said urgently. 'Now.'\n
\n\n'Are you sure, Susan, dear?' Dr Who's voice quivered with concern for his younger grand-daughter. \n
\nThey were now back inside Tardis with Susan sitting on a chair surrounded by her three

obviously concerned companions.\n
\n‘It’s not possible for any human form to exist on this planet,’ Dr Who protested, as though trying to persuade himself that the girl was mistaken.\n
\n‘It was a hand!’ Susan insisted firmly. ‘I saw it. It touched me on the shoulder!’\n
\n‘Hmm…’ Dr Who nodded firmly, dispelling any thought that he might doubt Susan’s account of what had happened in the forest. ‘Then I’d like to find out who or what it was.’\n
\nIan shook his head firmly. ‘Rather you than me,’ he said, matching the old man’s intensity. ‘We don’t know where we are, or what period in time.’ \n
\nDr Who nodded. ‘We don’t have the co-ordinates to set the…’\n
\nThe old man stopped abruptly. Someone – something – had tapped on the door of Tardis. He spun and moved quickly towards the door but Ian caught his arm.\n
\n‘We don’t know what might be out there,’ the younger man warned.\n
\nDr Who was about to argue but Ian was making sense. They really didn’t know what was outside or how dangerous it might be. ‘The scanner,’ he said, hurrying towards one of the banks of controls. He flipped switches and turned a dial. A few moments later a TV screen high on the wall flickered into life. The picture showed the dead jungle outside Tardis’s doors. As Dr Who turned a dial, the camera rotated, giving a three hundred and sixty degree view of the area around the ship. The jungle was still and quiet. \n
\nToo still and too quiet.\n
\n‘Nobody,’ said Dr Who, peering intently at the flickering image on the screen. ‘Not a thing.’\n
\n‘Well, something must have made that noise,’ protested Ian, ‘and I don’t want to find out what it is.’\n
\nBarbara spoke up in support of Ian’s argument. ‘Can’t you set the controls for home?’ she asked her grandfather.\n
\nThe old man’s mouth quirked unhappily but he seemed to concede. ‘Certainly,’ he said. Reaching for the controls, he programmed Tardis for the return journey to his back garden ‘All set,’ he said, and swept a hand towards the control lever which set the ship in motion.\n
\nBarbara dropped a hand on Ian’s shoulder. ‘Well, you got us here,’ she said. ‘You might as well get us back.’\n
\nThe thought of returning to his safe – albeit dull – life in London brought some of swagger back into Ian Chesterton. With Barbara close by his side he crossed to the control level and confidently pushed it forward.\n
\nImmediately it was clear that something was very wrong. A dull, throbbing alarm sounded through Tardis rather than the swirling, whooshing sound which had accompanied their previous journey.\n Ian turned to Dr Who, who looked rather peeved by his invention’s failure. ‘What’s the matter?’ Ian asked.\n
\n‘There’s something wrong somewhere,’ Dr Who said stiffly. He pressed a red button suspended among a spider’s web of wires, cables and small panels. ‘I’ll try the fault locator,’ he

said, his eyes flicking from a small circular screen to a display bank of coloured lights which flashed rhythmically. It took only a few seconds for the answer to become clear. ‘K7. The fluid link section.’\n
\nIan frowned. ‘The what?’\n
\nDr Who led his party to a cream-coloured panel just behind the control lever which housed four clear tubes roughly the size of a flute or a recorder. ‘That’s it. The fluid link.’ The old man removed the bottom left tube and inspected it with a slight show of irritation. ‘This end has been jarred out of position,’ he said, tapping one end of the fluid link. ‘Some of the fluid has simply run out.’\n
\n‘Have you got a spare?’ Ian asked urgently. He was obviously – and understandably – worried that the ship might be stranded on that dead world.\n
\nDr Who was far more relaxed about the malfunction. ‘Oh, we don’t need one,’ he said confidently. He waved the fluid link at Ian. ‘This just needs refilling with mercury. I have some in my labora...’ his voice faltered and tailed away, ‘...tory.’ The old man’s face had become grey and serious as he realised that his laboratory was billions of miles away on another world in another time.\n
\nIan saw the worry in Dr Who’s face and his stomach lurched. \n
\nBarbara was equally concerned and clutched her grandfather’s arm nervously. ‘Supposing there isn’t any mercury on this planet?’ she asked.\n
\nDr Who’s face set firmly. ‘We’ll have to try the city,’ he said worriedly. ‘It’s about the only place we’re likely to find any.’\n
\nAs he passed Barbara and Ian, Dr Who was aware of Susan looking up at him. Her eyes positively gleamed with mischief and delight. Despite her ordeal in the jungle she was obviously still desperate to investigate the metal city... and it was equally obvious that she understood his little subterfuge and approved of it. They exchanged a conspiratorial smile and they went to prepare for their trek to the city.\n
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\nTardis’s wooden door creaked open and Dr Who again stepped out onto the lifeless grey sand. Susan’s hand was held firmly in his. Ian and Barbara brought up the rear with Barbara reluctantly closing Tardis’s door behind them.\n
\nThe jungle was darker than it had been. While they had been inside Tardis either the clouds had grown thicker or night had begun to fall. The sky was so oddly coloured in mottled shades of green and grey that it was impossible to be sure which it was, day or night.\n
\nDr Who and Susan had started a circuit of the ground surrounding Tardis, searching for the prints of whatever had tapped on the ship, but there were no tracks and none of the rocks which littered the sand seemed to have been moved.\n
\n‘Grandfather!’\n
\nThe alarm in Barbara’s voice made Dr Who spin sharply. On the opposite side of the small

clearing in which Tardis had landed, Barbara and Ian were slowly approaching a small rectangular metal box which lay in the sand.\n
\nThe old man hurried towards the young couple. ‘Be careful!’ He caught each of them by an arm and pulled them back a few steps. He was still pulling them away when he saw that Susan had followed him and was reaching for the box. ‘Susan!’ he called desperately.\n
\nBarbara echoed her grandfather’s concern. ‘Susan!’\n
\nIan reached desperately to pull Susan away from the box but he was too late. She had already grasped it. Instinctively he threw his arms over his face and spun away.\n
\nNothing happened.\n
\nWhen Ian opened his eyes, Dr Who was walking towards Susan, who had opened the metal box. Inside was a row of glass phials containing some kind of liquid. A second row consisted of what looked like pink pills. She handed the box to her grandfather.\n‘Right,’ said Dr Who, as if there had been no cause for panic at all. ‘Thank you, Susie.’ He lifted the box and examined it closely, pinching his pince nez onto his nose. ‘It looks like some sort of drug,’ he said, plucking a phial from the box and holding it up to his eye. ‘I wonder what it is.’\n
\nBarbara nervously looked around the clearing and into the forest beyond. ‘So there was someone here.’\nDr Who nodded to himself. ‘I shall make some tests on these when we get home.’ He handed the box back to Susan. ‘Now, perhaps you’ll put those inside for me, will you, Susan, dear?’\n
\nSusan nodded and hurried back into Tardis.\n
\nDr Who put his pince nez back into the pocket of his waistcoat and rubbed his hands together. ‘And now...’ he said, letting Susan take his hand as she returned from Tardis, ‘...for the city.’\n

\nCHAPTER THREE\n
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\nThe City\n
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\nThe trek to the metal city had been longer and more arduous than anyone in Dr Who's party had expected. The city itself was much larger than they had thought and more than a little further away. They had passed through the petrified forest onto a wide, arid plain. Their feet had sunk ankle-deep into the sand with every step so that it felt more like they were picking their way through snow. A small outcrop of boulders part way across the plain barred their way. Clam-bering over those rocks was a blessed relief from the sensation of the sand trying to suck their feet into the ground. Eventually, after a good two hours of hard slog they had reached the base of a rocky incline which led up to what appeared to be the edge of the metal city. The climb was a difficult one but the nearness of the city gave them the energy to climb up those last yards and pull themselves on the metal surface of the city's streets. \n
\nIan considered himself to be fit and healthy. He had been drilled into good shape during his National Service and he was still active now, playing football twice a week and turning out for the local cricket side during the summer. He also went dancing – hopefully from now on with Barbara – every weekend, but even he was feeling the effects of the journey. He was out of breath and perspiring heavily. His shirt was soaked with sweat and his muscles ached.\n
\nDr Who, not surprisingly was faring worse. 'That was a steep climb, wasn't it, Susie?' the old man puffed. He mopped at his brow with a handkerchief and grasped one of the bizarre-looking plinth-mounted metal artefacts for support.\n
\nSusan immediately hurried to her grandfather's side. 'What's the matter?'\n
\n'It's all right, dear,' said Dr Who. He didn't sound particularly convincing.\n
\nBarbara was only a step behind Susan. 'Grand-father, are you all right?'\n
\n'Just a little tired,' admitted Dr Who. 'My legs are rather weak.'\n
\nIan had been inspecting what looked a kind of arched doorway. He was leaning against the metal door under the pretence of examining the doorway while he had actually been catching his breath. Oddly, the arch seemed to be skewed and not symmetrical as he thought it should be. It felt wrong. It felt alien. \n
\nWell, it would, wouldn't it? Ian thought wryly.\n
\nPushing himself away from the door, Ian returned to the others. 'I don't feel too well myself,' he confessed.\n
\nDr Who nodded. 'Must be the altitude,' he puffed and wafted a hand at Ian encouragingly. 'Take a good, deep breath, lad.' Dr Who sucked in several deep breaths and encouraged Ian to follow suit. 'That's better,' he said as Ian breathed deeply. 'Yes, that's the way.'\n
\nIan nodded after a few breaths. Dr Who had been right. He was indeed feeling a bit better.\n

\nDr Who was also showing signs of having recovered some of his vigour. He sucked in a deep breath and straightened up to his full height, summoning his energy reserves. ‘Now,’ he said briskly, ‘in a city like this, there must be laboratories. That is where we could find some mercury.’\n
\nIan and Barbara agreed that the assertion made sense.\n
\n‘Now,’ continued Dr Who, pointing at the oddly-shaped arched doorways which appeared at regular intervals along the nearest building’s wall. ‘I suggest we all take different directions and then all meet back here. How’s that?’ He looked to his companions for their approval, which they silently gave with nods. ‘Yes? Right. Back in ten minutes.’ He took Susan’s hand and headed for the third doorway along. ‘Now, you come along with me, Susie.’ As they approached their archway, a line appeared down the middle of the metal shutter covering the archway and it split into two halves which swung outwards to let them enter. As they went through, the shutters slid back into place behind them.\n
\nBarbara walked towards the first of the three archways and pointed at the centre of the three. ‘You take that one,’ she said to Ian.\n
\n‘Okay,’ Ian agreed. A moment later, Barbara disappeared through her archway leaving Ian alone.\n
\nSquaring his shoulders, Ian strode towards the arched doorway. When Dr Who and Susan and then Barbara had approached their doors, the shutters had automatically swung open allowing them to enter. The shutters in front of Ian, however, remained resolutely closed and he walked nose-first into the metal barrier.\n
\nRubbing his aching nose, Ian stared at the doorway in confusion. Why hadn’t the door opened?\n
\nHe took a few steps back and then approached the doorway again, in case whatever sensor triggered the door simply hadn’t registered his presence.\n
\nNothing happened.\n
\nThe door stayed closed.\n
\nAware that he was being absurdly optimistic, Ian Chesterton raised his hand and knocked politely on the metal shutter.\n
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\nInside the city, Barbara found herself walking along a claustrophobic metal corridor. There were no windows, and the arched doorways were all low enough that anyone over average height would have needed to stoop to pass through them. She had never liked cramped spaces. The walls and doors were made of metal and the just-too-warm air had a metallic, chemical taste. It reminded her of something but she couldn’t remember what.\n
\nThe low ceiling didn’t help Barbara’s feeling of unease and it took every ounce of her willpower to continue moving forward instead of running back to the open air outside.\n
\nNo, she told herself firmly, she would learn nothing if she went back. \n

\nIgnoring the urge to turn around, Barbara carried on along the corridor.\n
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\nIan Chesterton was still having no success at opening the shutters across his doorway.\n
\nHe tried walking towards the door again, and again the door refused to budge. Putting his shoulder to the metal shutter, Ian tried to push the doors open. Firmly planting his feet he pushed harder. Nothing happened.\n
\nGiving the door an indignant glare, Ian skulked away and sat on the flat plinth Dr Who had rested on a few minutes earlier. He hadn't wanted to explore the wretched city anyway. He was happy enough wait for the others to come back.\n
\nAs he sat, the shutters covering his doorway swung open.\n
\nRising to his feet, Ian managed two steps before the shutters clanged shut again. He sank down on the plinth again and again the shutters swung open. \n
\nSo that was the trigger, eh, he thought. \n
\nIan snapped to his feet and strode briskly towards the doors… which again swung closed before he could reach them. The door seemed to be taunting him and he was not going to be made to look daft by a stupid piece of metal.\n
\nIan stood as far from the plinth as he could while still able to reach it with his hand and exert some downward force. As soon as he pressed down the shutters swung open. Ian bolted for the door.\n
\nThe shutters slammed shut an instant before Ian slammed into them. He staggered back and dropped onto his backside.\n
\nHe was not giving in to these doors!\n
\n \n
\nInside the metal building, Barbara continued to move pensively along the metal corridors. The deeper into the building she went, the more claustrophobic and uneasy she felt. The corridors now had some kind of swirling metallic adornment on their walls and just above head height there was some kind of decoration. Circular blue plates housed golden orbs on short stalks.\n
\nHad she looked back the way she had come, Barbara would have realised that her unease was justified. The golden orbs on stalks had all swung in her direction as she had passed and a camera-like iris had appeared on each of them.\n
\nAlthough she was entirely unaware of the fact, Barbara was being observed.\n
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\nIn a single movement, Ian Chesterton slapped his hand down on the plinth and ran for the shutters barring the door. They shutters opened and closed just in time for Ian to again slam into them painfully. He turned away, ready to bellow something thoroughly foul but bit off the oath as a familiar voice sounded from the side.\n
\n 'Having trouble, lad?' Dr Who asked amiably.\n
\nThe old man had returned with Susan. It seemed they had been unsuccessful in their

exploration.\n
\n‘We didn’t find anything,’ said Susan, confirming Ian’s assessment.\n
\nIan, however, was still venting his frustration at the shutters behind him. ‘I can’t get through those doors!’ he explained.\n
\nDr Who nodded thoughtfully. ‘Why don’t you explain the problem?’ he said.\n
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\nBarbara usually prided herself on having a fairly good sense of direction, but the bland nature of these metallic corridors inside of the building meant that she was in real danger of becoming lost. \n
\nShe would give it another minute before turning back.\n
\nTurning a corner, Barbara walked towards the next doorway. Her heart lurched as she saw a dull metal shutter slide down, sealing the doorway. She ran forward and pushed against the shutter. It was no good. The shutter simply refused to move. She turned and hurried back along the corridor. It was time to get out of there and back to the others.\n
\nThe doorway she had come through moments earlier was now also blocked by a shutter.\n
\nLooking around desperately for any way out, Barbara realised with dread that she was trapped.\n
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\nDr Who was still mulling how to solve the problem of Ian’s petulant door when the distant sound of Barbara’s scream echoed from the doorway she had taken. \n
\nAbandoning Ian’s door they all ran for the arch Barbara had passed through into the building. The corridor ahead of them twisted and turned a few times but there appeared to have been only a single route Barbara could have followed.\n
\nIan ran at a good pace and was surprised that Dr Who managed to keep up. Concern for his grand-daughter had obviously given the old man a burst of energy. Abruptly, their progress was halted by a solid metal shutter. \n
\nIan beat at the metal and tried to push the door open. It refused to move.\n
\nDr Who caught Ian’s arm. ‘Let’s try the other way,’ he said. ‘I know how to open your doorway outside.’\n
\nIan nodded and ran back towards the doorway. He arrived at the shuttered arch that had taunted him just a few footsteps ahead of Dr Who and Susan.\n
\nThe old scientist pointed at the plinth which triggered the door’s opening mechanism. ‘Susan, dear, you sit on there while we try to keep those doors open.’\n
\n‘All right.’ Susan nodded and hurried to the plinth.\n
\nDr Who took up position on one side of the doorway and Ian moved to the other, ready to move as soon as required. Dr Who looked back to Susan. ‘When I shout, you run just as fast as you can.’ Susan nodded her understanding. ‘Good girl. Ready?’ Susan nodded again. ‘Now, Susan!’\n

\nThe girl sat on the plinth. Instantly the two shutters swung open. Ian and Dr Who quickly moved into the doorway, bracing their shoulders against the metal shutters.\n
\n‘Run!’ Dr Who shouted to Susan. ‘Fast!’\n
\nThe girl did as she was told and bolted for the doorway. As soon as her weight left the plinth the shutters began to slide shut. Both Dr Who and Ian winced and gasped as the tremendous weight of the doors and the force of some hydraulic control pushed hard to close the shutters.\n
\n‘Hurry,’ Ian gasped.\n
\nThe girl barely made it through the doorway before the force of the shutters overcame Ian and Dr Who, sending both men staggering into the building.\n
\nIan massaged his shoulder. He hated to think what kind of bruising he would have from the duel with that door but at least they were inside and they could set about finding Barbara.\n
\nBarbara.\n
\nForgetting his aching shoulder, Ian turned and set off along the metal corridor with Dr Who and Susan close behind.\n
\n‘Not too fast, lad,’ called Dr Who cautiously. ‘Not too fast.’\n
\nThe doorway directly ahead looked promising to Ian but the shutter refused to move as he presented himself in front of it.\n
\nDr Who, still tightly gripping Susan’s hand, had followed the corridor branching to their right. ‘Come on, lad.’\n
\n‘All right,’ Ian agreed.\n
\nThey followed the corridor for ten yards or so before the old man stopped, his head cocked. ‘Wait.’\n
\n‘What is it?’ Ian asked.\n
\n‘Listen,’ said Dr Who. ‘Can you hear it?’\n
\nIan listened carefully. The old man’s hearing was as sharp as a tack. The sound of machinery was coming from somewhere nearby.\n
\nDr Who turned his head slowly before pointing to an open arched door. ‘It’s coming from over there.’\n
\nWithout waiting for a reply, Dr Who set off towards the source of the noise with Ian following closely behind. The doorway led to a short corridor which turned sharply to the right where it opened into a large control room of some kind. The wall facing them was filled with rows of screens showing images of the city as well as countless scientific readings while the adjacent walls were covered with an array of dials, meters and screens showing an extraordinary display of data. The monitoring equipment was all clearly active. It was the first sign of life they had seen in the city.\n
\n‘Well…’ Dr Who breathed, clearly impressed by the level of technology on display.\n
\nSusan slipped her hand from her grandfather’s and ran towards the rows of screens.\n
\n‘Susan!’ called Dr Who, beckoning for her not to stray too far from his side. ‘Susan, dear.’

Susan spun around and ran back to her grandfather. ‘Measuring instruments,’ the old man said to Ian, pointing at a digital display screen. ‘But to measure what, I wonder?’\n
\nIan had no idea and said as much.\n
\nDr Who flipped a switch and sighed. It seemed that his worst fears had been confirmed. ‘This is some sort of Geiger counter,’ he said sadly. He swallowed hard and pointed at a meter whose needle was now well past a line separating a white sector from a grey area. The needle was firmly embedded in the grey. ‘And it is past the danger point.’ His eyes danced across the other readings and Ian was astonished at how quickly the old man had managed to decipher them. ‘The atmosphere is polluted with a very high level of radioactive fallout,’ finished Dr Who.\n
\nIan was aware that he was no scientist but he understood the dangers of radiation and fallout. ‘Then we must find Barbara and get back to Tardis.’ He shook his head, remembering the reason they had come to the city. ‘Even if we do, we can’t leave until we get some mercury.’\n
\nDr Who shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot. ‘Young man,’ he said miserably, ‘I have to confess, there is nothing wrong with the fluid link. I just didn’t want to leave until we had explored the city.’ He looked at Ian with apologetic eyes. ‘Please forgive me.’\n
\nIan was more inclined to throttle the old scientist rather than forgive him but their first concern had to be finding Barbara. ‘Well, let’s get out of here,’ he said, turning away from the controls.\n
\nHe stopped suddenly.\n
\nMoving in perfect unison, seven terrifying alien machines had them surrounded.\n
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\nCHAPTER FOUR\n
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\nThe Daleks\n
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\nThe machines were around the height of a short-ish man. They were vaguely conical, broad at the bottom, tapering to a domed top about a foot wide. They appeared to be constructed of distinct and different sections. At the bottom was a four or five inch high base which looked rather like the bottom of a bumper car from a fun-fair. On top of that was an angular skirt made of a dozen or more vertical panels, each of which had four domes placed on it. In the middle was a set of bands at the front of which were two dangerous looking rods, one of them a vicious looking clamp and the other a strange hollow affair like a squashed egg-whisk, which could only be a gun. Above the horizontal bands was a grilled section which led up to the inverted bowl-like dome at the top. Another rod, this one with a bulbous shape attached to the end was at the front. Odd shapes on either side of the dome looked ominously like horns. The domes at the top seemed to be able to swivel and Ian realised that the small rod on the dome at the top had to be some kind of eye.\n
\nThe horns flashed as the machine spoke. The voice was on one level, a dull, grating monotone devoid of any hint of humanity or empathy. Ian shivered. It sounded utterly alien and utterly evil.\n
\n‘You will move ahead of us and follow directions.’ The lights on the dome of one of the machines flashed indicating that it was the one that had spoken.\n
\nTwo of the machines retreated and Ian noticed that they glided gracefully over the metal floor. They seemed to give off a sharp metallic scent, too.\n
\n‘This way,’ the leading machine said in that horrible voice.\n
\nThere was no doubt that they were now captives of these machines. Ian felt certain that they were evil. He could sense it from them. For all of their intelligence, Dr Who was a frail old man and Susan was just a child. He couldn’t let them be taken by these machine creatures. Perhaps if he could distract the machines it would give Dr Who and Susan the chance to escape.\n
\nMoving suddenly, Ian bolted through the gap between two of the machines. He heard a movement behind him. For an instant there was a hissing noise and an excruciating burning pain all down his back and then… the floor swooped up to hit him hard.\n
\nIan gasped as he landed painfully and then gasped again as the agony swept from his back down into his legs. He tried to stand, to move, to somehow get away but he couldn’t make his legs move. Through the pain it became clear that he couldn’t actually feel his legs. All he could feel was pain.\n
\nThe machines observed Ian’s body impassively for a moment.\n
\n‘He will recover shortly,’ the lead machine said in its inhuman drone. \n

\nSusan ran to Ian’s side and tried to help him rise.\n
\nThe machines paid them little heed. The lead machine, which was black and gold, rather than the blue and grey of the others, turned back to Dr Who and indicated the old man with its pincer arm. ‘Search him.’\n
\nA cone of light appeared abruptly over Dr Who, pulsing slowly down the old man’s body. It stopped at his waist. One of the machines glided forward and pushed Dr Who’s jacket aside with its pincer arm. It snapped shut on the fluid link which projected from the scientist’s inner jacket pocket and pulled it away.\n
\n‘That is of no value to you!’ Dr Who protested, reaching desperately for the vital component of his beloved Tardis. ‘It...’\n
\nOne of the black machine’s rods extended suddenly, barring Dr Who from following the machine that had taken the fluid link. ‘Come this way.’\n
\nDr Who looked from the machine holding the fluid link to Ian and Susan, then back to the machine, before finally settling his eyes on his grand-daughter and their injured friend. He slipped an arm under Ian’s shoulder and between them he and Susan struggled to lift him. Directed by the black and gold machine, they carried their injured companion out of the room.\n
\n \n
\nBarbara was trapped. The room was small and it seemed to be getting smaller. The air was getting stuffy and hard to breathe. The entire room felt like it was pushing in towards her. She was sure the walls were moving inwards. She ceiling was coming down. It had been higher before, hadn’t it?\n
\nShe knew that it was her mind playing tricks. She had never liked enclosed spaces. Once, when she was very young, she had locked herself in an airing cupboard. She hadn’t been able to open the door and as the panic had risen she had unsettled the shelf above her head, bringing its contents down and burying her under a weight of blankets and towels. She had hunkered frightened and alone in the dark for what seemed like forever until her grandfather had opened the door to let her free to escape into the safety of his hug. His hugs had always made things better.\n
\nShe was alone.\n
\nGrandfather wasn’t there with any hugs and the room was closing in on her. No matter how far she backed away from the wall it kept closing on her, dragging the ceiling lower, closing the room down, shrinking it, shrinking it, shrinking it.\n
\nBarbara pushed the heels of her hands into her eyes to block out the approaching walls. She couldn’t breathe. She felt her heart thundering, heard the blood pounding in her ears. \n
\nMetal moved against metal. \n
\nBarbara spun and opened her eyes in terror. She almost wept with relief at the sight of the familiar figure entering a room that suddenly seemed much larger than it had been just a few seconds before. She ran towards her grandfather, Susan and Ian. ‘Thank goodness, you’ve

come!'\n
\nRelief filled her grandfather's face as he saw her. 'I'm so glad you're safe!'\n
\nIt was only then that Barbara realised that the other two were struggling to hold Ian upright. His legs appeared to be completely dead. 'Ian! Ian, what happened to you?'\n
\n'Oh, it's nothing.' He was putting on a brave face. He was obviously both worried and in extreme pain.\n
\n'He'll be all right in a minute,' Dr Who said reassuringly.\n
\nIan seemed to take his cue from the old man's confidence and moved his arm from round Dr Who's shoulders. 'Yeah,' he agreed. A moment later he crashed to the metal floor as his legs gave way again.\n
\n'Ian!' Barbara had been just too slow to catch him.\nDr Who moved with surprising speed to the young man's side. 'Don't worry. Don't worry, Barbara,' he said, 'it is only a temporary shock.' The old scientist slipped his hands under one of Ian's shoulders and Barbara took the other. Between them they moved Ian toward a metal ledge projecting from one of the walls. 'Get him up over here. Hup.' They lifted Ian onto the ledge, which was roughly as deep as a park bench and ran the width of the wall.\n
\nIan looked at them both with a mixture of embarrassment, fear and gratitude. 'Thanks.'\n
\nDr Who had looked around the metal box which now acted as their cell. For the first time, Barbara noticed that the metal shutters which had swung open to allow her grandfather and the others to enter was now closed. It flashed into her mind that she had seen two of those terrible mechanical creatures that had captured her out in the corridor behind Dr Who and the others, but they had been pushed from her thoughts by Ian's collapse. 'At least we're all together,' Dr Who was saying. The old man turned his eyes to Barbara. 'How do you feel?' he asked.\n
\nBarbara didn't want to admit to her panic in the room but she couldn't hide that something was wrong. 'Sort of weak and giddy,' she admitted.\n
\nDr Who nodded and looked to his younger grand-daughter. 'And you, Susan?'\n
\n'I feel the same,' the girl confessed reluctantly.\n
\nDr Who sighed and adopted the thoughtful expression Barbara knew so well. It was the one he wore when he was running a hundred difficult questions or computations in his head. 'We found a Geiger counter upstairs,' he told Barbara. 'This planet has a high level of radiation, perhaps the result of some past atomic war. All the time we were in the open, we were exposed to it.'\n
\nIan had forced himself to sit up straight, but Barbara kept her attention on Dr Who. 'What's going to happen to us, Grandfather?' she asked.\n
\nThe old man's desperately concerned expression was as telling as his words. 'Unless we can get some treatment, we have little hope of survival.'\n
\n\nIn another control room lined with complex equipment, two of the mechanical creatures watched the conversation between Dr Who and his companions on a large viewing screen set into the wall. One was the black and gold machine which seemed to be the leader and the other

was in the usual blue and grey livery. \n
\n‘Our prisoners are showing signs of radiation sickness.’ The lights on the dome of the blue and grey machine flashed as it spoke.\n
\nThe lights on the black machine flashed. ‘But they have not yet perished from it.’\n
\nThe grey machine replied in its grating monotone, ‘They must have found something that makes them immune while we must remain in these protective machines and cannot go out of our city.’\n
\n‘If we had it, we could leave the city,’ the black and gold machine said, ‘destroy all others and have the planet for ourselves.’ It turned back to look directly at the screen on which Dr Who’s party were shown languishing in their cell. ‘Let us overhear what our prisoners say. Perhaps they will give us the answer.’\n
\nA third machine, this time in red, glided forward and joined the others in watching the screen, where Dr Who talked, completely unaware that every move and every word were being observed.\n
\n\nThe ledge Dr Who and Barbara had lifted Ian onto was large enough for all of the four travellers to sit on it. This was a blessing as none of them seemed to have the energy to stand. Each of them was now suffering from varying degrees of radiation sickness. They had all complained of nausea and light headedness and they were all dizzy when they tried to stand. Ian and Barbara had exchanged a concerned look over Dr Who’s condition. The elderly scientist appeared to be short of breath and struggling to focus. He seemed utterly exhausted, but somehow he was managing to keep his brain in full working order.\n
\n‘If some form of life does exist outside this city,’ Dr Who said, ‘they must have discovered an anti-radiation drug.’\n
\n‘Well?’ Barbara asked.\n
\nDr Who dabbed at his sweating forehead with a handkerchief. ‘That box of glass vials we found outside Tardis. Remember?’\n
\nIan nodded.\n
\n‘Yes,’ Barbara agreed, ‘I remember.’\n
\nIn the Control Room, the black machine turned away from the screen. It had heard what it needed to hear. It knew what it needed to do.\n
\nA few minutes later the black machine, escorted by its red counterpart, glided through the swinging metal shutters and into the cell containing Dr Who’s party.\n
\n‘One of you four must go outside the city,’ the black and gold machine grated out without any kind of preamble. ‘Which will it be?’\n
\nThe four captives struggled to focus on the machine. ‘Why?’ Dr Who managed to ask.\n
\nThe machine’s lights flashed as it spoke in that horrible, inhuman voice. ‘Many centuries ago, there were two peoples on this planet. Ourselves, the Daleks, and the Thals. After the neutronic war, our forefathers retired into the city, protected by this clothing. Most of the Thals perished in

the war. Those who survived and remain on this planet are horrible mutations, monsters. They have a drug which cures the sickness of radiation. If we get the drug, we will give some to you. Without it, you will die.' Its story was told without the slightest hint of emotion.\n
\n'None of us is well enough to go, protested Dr Who.\n
\nThe machine – the Dalek as they now knew it was called – had little sympathy. 'One of you must,' it ordered.\n
\nIan tried to force himself up to his feet. 'I'll go.' His voice sounded weak and unfocused. An instant later his already injured legs gave way beneath him and he collapsed to the floor.\n
\nWhile Barbara and Dr Who tried to help Ian back onto the ledge, a small figure moved past them to join the Daleks.\n
\n'I'll do it.'\n
\n'Susan!' exclaimed Barbara.\n
\n'It's too dangerous,' Dr Who protested, but the truth was that everyone in the room, human and Dalek, knew that Susan was the only member of the party still physically capable of enduring the journey.\n
\nGuided by the cold, metal arms of the Black Dalek, Susan left the room.\n
\n'Hurry,' Dr Who called after her. 'Hurry, Susie.'\n
\nHis call for haste was not merely based on their urgent need for medication, but also on the look of terror he had seen on his grand-daughter's face.\n\n

\nCHAPTER FIVE\n
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\nAlone in the Petrified Forest\n
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\nIn their control room, the Black Dalek and a red subordinate watched Susan's progress on a screen as she crossed the open desert towards the hills and the dead forest beyond. Neither of them moved or spoke until she was approaching the point at which she would disappear from their sight. \n
\n'The young one is approaching the forest,' the Black Dalek, the only member of the race to have an individual name – the functional "Black Dalek" – eventually grated in its emotionless monotone.\n
\n'She will be there in a moment now,' the red Dalek conformed, its eye stalk scanning read outs to the side of the screen. 'If she returns with the drug, am I to allow the prisoners to use some?'\n
\n'No,' the Black Dalek answered immediately. 'Their only value is to bring us the drug to duplicate for ourselves.' It paused for a moment, relishing its words. 'Let them die.'\n
\n\nDr Who's eyes fluttered as he floated on the edge of consciousness. Occasionally he was able to summon enough focus to try to speak but to Barbara his words were either incomprehensible mumblings or just made no sense. His head lifted again before he slumped back against the metal wall, crumpled in the corner of the bench-like ledge.\n
\n'Oh, dear,' the old man mumbled in a low breath. 'I'm so sorry. It was all my fault.'\n
\nBarbara put her hand to her Grandfather's forehead. Even though she was feverish herself, the old man's skin felt painfully hot to the touch. 'Oh, dear,' she said weakly, 'he's getting worse.' Ian had pushed himself up to his feet and taken a few unsteady steps away, his back turned to her. She got the sense that Ian simply didn't want her to see his face. 'What does he mean, it's all his fault? He's not making any sense.'\n
\nIan turned, and Barbara knew she had been right. There was definitely something Ian didn't want to talk about. 'There was nothing wrong with the fluid link,' Ian admitted. 'Your grandfather just wanted to explore the city.' He slumped back down onto the bench. 'And now the Daleks have taken it from him.'\n
\nBarbara didn't have the energy to be angry with her grandfather. She couldn't have been anyway. More than not having the strength, if this was to be the end for him she didn't want her last moments with her grandfather to be angry ones. 'What are we going to do?' she asked, surprised by how weak she sounded.\n
\nIan's reply brought no hope. 'Nothing we can do,' he said. He sounded defeated. 'Just wait. Hope nothing happens to Susan.'\n
\n\nThe journey back towards Tardis was terrifying.\n

\nSusan had been herded to the edge of the city by two of the standard blue and grey Daleks. Neither had spoken to her after the Black Dalek had instructed her to go and collect the drugs from the forest. They had simply used their arms to guide her – not too gently – in the direction they wanted her to go. Even at the edge of the metal city they had said nothing. They had just turned away and glided back into the nearest building, leaving Susan to begin her journey.\n
\nClambering down the incline to the plain leading to the distant forest was difficult and the ground underfoot was as treacherous as she remembered, making every step difficult.\n
\nHalfway across the plain, the skies had darkened and unhealthy-looking green and mustard-orange cloud has begun to roll in, bringing violent flashes of lightning and cracks of thunder which seemed to shake the ground. She had almost reached the edge of the forest when the first raindrops fell. Each drop was heavy and fell hard, sending great splashes from the ground or from Susan's face. Every one that hit her stung viciously and Susan was relieved to reach the forest where the dead trees offered some protection from the rain.\n
\nThe sky darkened as more clouds were blown in on strengthening winds that caught and whipped at Susan's hair and clothes. It whistled through the unmoving branches in the dead forest. Lightning flashed across the sky. Flaring shadows joined the whistling of the wind in moving all around her, bringing the dead forest to life. Everything moved, everything whispered.\n
\nShe wasn't alone.\n
\nShe heard movement.\n
\nWas that breathing?\n
\nLightning flared again and the wind snapped a thin twig from a tree. Susan brushed it away before it could hit her.\n
\nShe was being stupid. There was nothing else in this forest or jungle or whatever is had once been. They had investigated just after they arrived. The forest was dead.\n
\nLike the planet was dead? They had thought that and then they had met the Daleks.\n
\nAnd then there was the box of drugs. Somebody had dropped those. If her grandfather was right – and if the Daleks were telling the truth – and there had been a nuclear war, what kind of radioactive mutation would have survived in the forest?\n
\nThe kind of monster that had tried to grab her the previous day?\n
\nSusan looked around desperately, trying to find her bearings, to work out the direction that would lead her back to Tardis.\n
\nShe would be safe there.\n
\nShe would be safe in Tardis.\n
\nShe ran.\n
\nBut even as she ran the wind became louder and the wind shipped at her. She pushed through branches and trailing vines, weaving between trees and jumping over fallen trunks.\n
\nThe wind and vines caught at Susan, slowing her progress. She was exhausted. On some

inner level she knew that the radiation sickness was making her paranoid as it increased the fever she had felt building for hours. She needed to stop and breathe but she couldn't. She daren't.\n
\nWas that a footstep behind?\n
\n'Who's there?'\n
\nShe looked all around but couldn't see the thing that was stalking her.\n
\n'Who are you?' she shouted. 'What do you want?'\n
\nOnly the storm answered, with more lightning and huge drops of rain blown in on vicious gusts of wind.\n
\nSusan turned and ran. She pushed her way through the branches and vines, ignoring their attempts to catch in her hair. She leaped over a fallen log and almost tripped on a series of small egg-shaped boulders embedded in the soil.\n
\nShe recognised the stones. She knew where she was. That meant she knew where Tardis was. She ran for the safety of the spaceship. She recognised a tree that had a fallen log near it. If she passed that it was just as few yards to the…\n
\nShe turned at the tree and mistimed her jump over the log, catching her foot on the petrified wood. She fell hard to the sandy ground. She pushed herself up… and froze.\n
\nA luminous mauve shell, about seven feet high seemed to be hovering just beyond the next tree. As Susan scrabbled backwards it began to turn towards her. She cupped her hands and scooped up sand, flinging it at the mauve creature. \n
\nShe was running again. Faster than she had ever run. There was Tardis. Was the creature behind her? She didn't look back. She just ran as fast as she could. She wasn't going to make it. The creature would catch her. She would never make it to Tardis...\n
\nHer fingers touched the reassuringly solid exterior of the ship and she yanked the door open, tumbling inside. She slammed the door closed and staggered away from it, catching her breath.\n
\nSomething was outside. She heard it moving. It had to be the fluorescent mauve creature she had seen. Susan looked desperately around the interior of Tardis for something she could use as a weapon to defend herself. There had to be something.\n
\nClick.\n
\nThe lock of Tardis's door had opened.\n
\nShe had been right. There was a mauve glow bleeding through the crack in the door. There had to be something she could use to defend herself against this monster.\n
\nThe door swung slowly open. Standing at the entrance of Tardis was the tallest man Susan had ever seen. He had to be six feet six at least. What she had thought to be a shell was a cloak he wore draped around his muscular shoulders. She supposed he was handsome and he had roughly cropped blonde hair. An ornate, almost Egyptian style of make-up surrounded his eyes. Eyes which scrutinised her with interest.\n

\nSusan backed away until her back bumped into the arm of her grandfather's favourite old rocking chair. \n
\nWhen had he brought that into Tardis? She remembered. He had brought a walking stick as well. If she could find that…\n
\nThe man had taken a few steps into Tardis and the doors had closed behind him.\n
\n'Who are you?' Susan shouted. 'What do you want?'\n
\nThe man spoke. 'My name is Alydon. I am a Thal.' His voice was calm, even and reassuring, almost exactly the opposite of the Daleks' horrible grating monotone. 'I tried to speak to you in the forest just now. I'm sorry I frightened you. I came back to make sure you knew how to use the drugs I left you.' He shook his head in surprise. 'I found no one here.'\n
\nAlthough he had entered Tardis without permission, the man – Alydon – showed no sign of the aggression or paranoia Susan had sensed from the Daleks. He seemed friendly and genuinely concerned for the wellbeing of Susan and her companions. There was something reassuringly plain and honest about the way he spoke, and Susan found that she believed him. He wasn't there to cause the travellers any harm. \n
\n'The others are prisoners of the Daleks in the city,' she told Alydon simply.\n
\nHe looked genuinely surprised by her news. 'There are people in the city?' he asked.\n
\nSusan wasn't sure she would have thought of the Daleks as "people" exactly but she nodded. 'They sent me back for the drugs.'\n
\nThe first flicker of suspicion crept across Alydon's handsome face. 'Do they want the drugs for themselves or for your friends?'\n
\nThat was a question Susan had wondered more than once as she had made her way back to Tardis. 'I don't know,' she admitted. 'I don't trust them.' How could she trust anyone who had shot Ian and imprisoned them all for no reason? There was also just a sense of dread and menace the Daleks gave off… she had never seen anything before which just seemed to be so alien, so unhuman… but Alydon wasn't human either and she trusted him. There was something honest and trustworthy about him. The Daleks? The Daleks were evil, she was sure of that.\n Alydon reached inside his cloak and produced another box of the radiation drugs, exactly the same as the box she had been sent to retrieve. 'I shall give you a second supply,' he said, 'which you must hide as best you can.' He handed the additional box of medication to Susan. He slid his cloak from around his shoulders and gave it to her. 'This should protect you from the worst of the storm.'\n
\nWithout the cloak, he wore only a simple outfit of a mustard coloured sleeveless shirt and matching trousers which were tucked into a pair of sturdy brown ankle boots. He was even more muscular than she had thought, and looked very, well, human for an alien.\n
\n'Thank you,' she said, taking the cloak, 'but I don't understand. They said you were mutations.'\nAlydon nodded thoughtfully. 'There were many mutations after the final war. Most of them perished.' He wafted a hand easily indicating his body. 'But this form, two hands, two eyes,

has always been best for survival.’\n
\nSusan shook her head in confusion. ‘But they called you monsters.’\n
\nAlydon didn’t answer immediately. ‘If they call us monsters,’ he said eventually, ‘what must they be like?’\n\n
\nThat was a question which stayed with Susan as she returned to the Dalek city. Alydon escorted her to the edge of the forest and promised that he and his people would watch from the trees to make sure that she got to the city safely. She appreciated knowing that she wasn’t completely alone on that journey, though Alydon had asked for Susan to do a great favour for his people. She had seen a number of the Thals on her way back to the plain. They had been like Alydon, tall, fair and attractive, all wearing that odd eye make-up and all offering nothing but friendship and kindness. The memory of those good people cheered her as she hurried back to the Dalek city, feeling the dread at seeing those metal creatures growing with every step but still forcing herself to move faster. The survival of her grandfather, Barbara and Ian depended on her getting the drugs back in time.\n
\nThe Daleks had obviously been observing her approach. As she climbed back up onto the metal platform at the edge of their city, two blue and grey drone Daleks had glided out of the nearest building and pushed her inside, jostling her towards the Control Room where the Black Dalek and its red subordinate waited. The Red Dalek plucked the box of drugs she carried out of her hand. Susan hoped that would be enough for the Daleks but they were as suspicious as she had feared they might be.\n
\n‘Have you brought anything else from your ship?’ the Black Dalek demanded.\n
\nSusan squared her shoulders. ‘No,’ she lied.\n
\nOne of the Black Dalek’s arm rods extended and for the first time Susan noticed that the longest of the rods seemed to be interchangeable. Some were pincers, but some, like the Black Dalek, had some kind of suction cup apparatus on the rod. Using that rod, the Black Dalek manoeuvred her towards a small raised square in the middle of the room, and pushed her up onto the raised dais. A mechanical apparatus of similar size and shape lowered from the roof until it was just over her head. A light strobed for a few seconds and then an alarm sounded and Susan felt a sudden jolt of electricity in her arm by Alydon’s cloak, which she carried over her arm – and inside which she had hidden the second box of radiation drugs.\n
\nThe red Dalek turned from a panel of readings. ‘You are hiding something,’ it grated. ‘Show it to me.’\n
\nThere was no way to deny that she had the drugs. Susan reached into the cloak and pulled out the box. She flipped the lid open to show the phials inside.\n
\nThe Daleks said nothing for a long moment. Eventually, it was the Black Dalek that spoke. ‘Give these other drugs to your friends,’ it said and turned away from Susan. \n
\nShe had no idea why the Daleks would allow them to keep the drugs but she didn’t care. It meant that she had a chance to save Grandfather and the others.\n\n

\nAn hour later, Dr Who was passing out the second stage of the radiation drugs. Susan had clearly been horrified to find her companions so weak when she had returned, but the Thal drugs worked remarkably quickly. Within half an hour they were all back on their feet and looking more like themselves. By the time an hour passed and they were ready for the second course of the treatment, they were all back to normal apart from being understandably tired.\n
\n‘Here’s yours, Barbara, dear,’ Dr Who said, handing a phial of the medication and a small pill to Barbara.\n
\nHis grand-daughter took the medication gratefully. ‘Thank you.’\n
\nWith the courses of the radiation medicine passed out and everyone clearly recovering Dr Who turned his attention to his younger grand-daughter and the cloak she had spread out on the ledge which had now become their bench. ‘So, a Thal gave you this cape, Susan?’\n
\nSusan nodded, obviously eager to finally be able to tell the story of her trip back to Tardis. ‘Yes. His name’s Alydon,’ she began. ‘He told me his people live far from here but this year their crops were ruined and they came here in search of food. He said his people would gladly give the Daleks the formula for the drug if the Daleks would give them food in return.’\n
\n \n
\nThe prisoners’ conversation was again being observed by the Black Dalek and its red lieutenant. \n
\n‘We do not need their formula,’ the Black Dalek rasped. ‘Now that the girl has brought us the drug, we can make it ourselves.’\n
\n‘We will rid ourselves of these protective machines, move beyond the limits of the city and destroy the Thals.’ The first hint of anything approaching emotion appeared in the red Dalek’s voice as it contemplated massacring the Thals.\n
\n‘No,’ the Black Dalek countered, ‘there is a better way. Let us offer them food, bring them into the city.’\n
\n‘A trap?’ the red Dalek asked eagerly.\n
\n‘Yes.’\n
\nThe red Dalek asked, ‘Will they not suspect anything?’\n
\nThe Black Dalek’s eye stalk peered at the screen, zooming in on Susan. ‘Not if the message is written by their friend, the young girl.’\n
\n \n
\nBarbara watched as Ian walked a few circuits of the small cell, stretching his back and flexing his legs. He was obviously not quite as fully recovered as he wanted to appear. As he reached a corner, the doors swung open revealing a red Dalek less than a foot from Ian’s position. \n
\n‘Ian!’ she yelled in automatic warning. \n
\nHis horrified step backwards might have been funny but for the terror on his face.\n
\nFor the first time Barbara saw that the Dalek had a plastic tray gripped in its pincer.\n
\n‘I have brought you more food and water,’ it grated, extending the tray towards Ian, who took it

tentatively. The Dalek swung its eye stalk to Susan. ‘The small one is to come with me.’\n
\nDespite his experience of the Dalek weapons, Ian protested, ‘What for?’\n
\n‘You have the drug,’ Dr Who took over. ‘When are you going to set us free?’ he demanded.\n
\nSusan reluctantly took a few faltering steps towards the Dalek. Dr Who quickly pushed up onto his feet to follow.\n
\n‘Stay!’ There was no doubting the threat in the Dalek’s voice or in the twitch of its gun arm in the inventor’s direction. Dr Who slowly sat down and watched as Susan crossed to join the machine creature. ‘We are going to help the Thals,’ the red Dalek grated, ‘which is what you want us to do.’\n
\nThe metal shutter swung closed, sealing the prison once again.\n
\nEach of the three captives left in the room had the same thought at the same moment, but it was Ian who put it into words first. ‘How do they know we wanted to help the Thals?’\n
\nSusan had been led back to the Control Room where sheets of some kind of metallic paper and writing implements with bizarre bubble heads sat on a gleaming worktop. With no option but to obey she had written down a letter, as dictated by the Black Dalek. She had no doubt that the image of her fellow captives on a large screen was there to ensure that she co-operated.\n
\n‘Add this,’ the Black Dalek rasped in that voice she had already come to hate, ‘write “The Daleks want only to help you and to be friends.”‘ There was nothing friendly in the Black Dalek’s tone. ‘Now sign your name!’\n
\nSusan did as she was told. She only hoped that Alydon or whichever Thal read the message would see that she had made certain letters in the note fractionally larger. If he did, Alydon would see the words IT IS A TRAP.\n
\n‘I’ve found it.’ Susan spun as she heard her grandfather’s voice. On the screen he pointed a bony finger directly into the lens of whatever camera was watching them. ‘Up there,’ he continued. ‘That’s how they know what we’re doing.’\n
\nThe red Dalek plucked the message away from Susan and the Black Dalek muted the screen. ‘All we wanted was this message,’ it said tonelessly to Susan. ‘When the Thals come to collect the food, we will destroy them.’\n
\nEven though there was no emotion in the Dalek’s voice, Susan sensed the creature’s bloodthirsty anticipation at the thought of the killing. It was distracted enough by its thoughts of death that it didn’t notice Susan slipping the bulb-headed writing implement into her pocket.\n
\nBack in their cell, Susan had quickly reassured her grandfather and Barbara that she was fine and had then joined Ian as he carried on walking circuits round the cell to bring full life back to his legs. At one point of the circuit she stopped abruptly and pulled Ian to a stop beside her. She turned her back to the wall and motioned for him to do the same. She quickly made a mime of an old-fashioned film camera, as she did when playing Charades and pointed at a bulbous projection high in the cell wall. She was delighted that Ian was not nearly as dim as she had once thought. He understood immediately and looked more than slightly angry that Dr Who was

right in his suggestion that they were being observed. Keeping her hand blocked from the camera by her body, Susan withdrew the Dalek writing implement from her pocket and mimed a screwdriver action with it. Ian nodded again and dropped to a knee so that she could climb on his shoulders.\n
\n‘What on earth are you two doing?’ Dr Who asked curiously.\n Ian lifted Susan and in a few seconds she had almost pulled the camera attachment free of its mounting. ‘We’ll be able to talk without them seeing or hearing us,’ she told the old man.\n
\n‘Is it coming away?’ Ian asked.\n
\nSusan heaved on the camera. ‘Yes. It’s a bit stuck.’\n
\n‘Right,’ Ian said encouragingly, ‘pull hard. I’ll hold you.’\n
\nSusan yanked the camera free.\n
\nA second later she and Ian were sprawling on the floor.\n
\n‘You’ll hold me?’ she said sourly.\n
\nIan struggled to sit upright, shrugged and grimaced an apology. ‘Sorry.’\n
\nSusan beamed a smile and held up the broken camera. ‘Never mind. We got the job done.’\n
\n \n
\nThe Black Dalek watched the last life drain from the screen showing the prisoners in their cell. ‘Our prisoners are intelligent.’\n
\n‘And perhaps dangerous,’ the red Dalek added. ‘Why not exterminate them now?’\n
\nThe Black Dalek considered for a moment. ‘They have been useful to us once. They may be again. First, let us exterminate the Thals.’\n
\nThe idea of exterminating the Thals seemed to quiet the red Dalek’s urge to kill the human prisoner. ‘Shall we replace the lens?’\n
\n‘No need,’ the Black Dalek answered confidently. ‘We have learned enough from our prisoners and we have them where they can do no harm.’\n
\n \n
\nFreed from the prying of the Dalek camera, Dr Who had convened his party into a war council.\n
\n‘They’re bringing the Thals into a trap,’ Susan said, putting it as plainly as she could. Even though there had been no alternative and she had tried to send a warning, it was clear the girl still felt guilty for writing the message.\n
\n‘Isn’t there anything we can do?’ asked Barbara. \n
\nIan rubbed his chin thoughtfully. ‘If we could find a weakness in the Daleks, just one...’\n
\n‘They are protected,’ Dr Who said, his mind racing through every possibility he could imagine. ‘They can move easily and they have weapons which can paralyse or destroy.’ He looked around the confines of their metal cell. ‘There is nothing we can do.’\n
\nSusan looked at him miserably. ‘Then the Thals are doomed.’\n\n
\nThe Thals – a few hundred of them in total – had set up camp in the dead forest less than a

hundred yards from the place Tardis had landed. Several of them had gone to inspect the strange blue box but none had gone inside. The box's owner wasn't there for them to ask permission and a Thal would never consider doing anything so rude as going in without the owner's permission.\n
\nAlydon strode through the camp, smiling warmly at his people, offering an encouraging smile or a kind word. He was their leader. His job was to give them hope, to keep them going. He knew that the course of action they had taken was a dangerous one but what choice did they have? There had been times in the past when they had gone hungry. If they couldn't find some kind of peace with the Daleks it was likely that his people would starve. \n
\nAlydon had been raised since he was a boy with the sure knowledge that one day the responsibility for all of his people would rest on his shoulders. While his father had been alive, the lessons had been drilled into Alydon, preparing him for the day he would take over as leader. When the rockslide had swept his father over the side of a cliff to his death, Alydon had only been able to cope with the grief because he had known his people relied entirely on him now.\n
\nLife had always been difficult for the Thals. They had to fight Skaro for every morsel of food it gave up to them. The planet grudged them every mouthful and some years Skaro came out on top. It was after several years on bad harvests that Alydon had eventually taken this desperate course of action. He still wasn't sure that he was right, but he knew that staying where they had been and just hoping for a better harvest next year would have been wrong.\n
\nAlydon's mood lightened as he saw Dyoni sitting by a small camp-fire, his dear old friend Temmosus leaning on a log behind her. Despite his friend's presence, Alydon had eyes only for Dyoni. Thankfully she was as besotted by Alydon as he was by her. Dyoni was tall, intelligent, kind and wise, all saving graces for her lack of judgement in loving him. She was the most beautiful of all the Thal women. To his eyes at least, and she seemed to like that fact. Dyoni was also blunt when the need arose.\n
\n'Suppose the Daleks refuse to help us?' she asked when she saw Alydon approach.\n
\n'Then we shall have to start back for our own country,' he replied evenly.\n
\n'Across the desert?' Temmosus protested. He sounded horrified by the prospect. 'Many of us will die.'\n
\nAlydon had been thinking about that very question. He had heard the stories and legends of the war and of the enemy his people had faced, but his entire life had been spent among the Thals, good people who helped each other and shared what little they had. Surely the Daleks couldn't be all that different? They were all from the same planet. 'But if the Daleks have food, how can they refuse it to us?'\n
\n'Look.' Dyoni was looking towards the far end of the camp. One of the younger members of their party was running towards Alydon. Something shiny glinted in his hand as the firelight caught an angle. \n
\nThe young man, whose name was Benodus, handed an unfurled silver scroll to Alydon. 'I

found this at the gates of the city.’\n
\nAlydon glared angrily at the young man for a moment. He had told his people not to go close to the city. It was too dangerous. He would deal with Benodus later. \n
\nHe looked through the message quickly, reading the uneven child’s handwriting. He could scarcely bring himself to believe what he was reading. When a person has needed something so badly and dreamed of it so often, the idea of achieving that goal is quite overwhelming. In Alydon’s case, it meant that he noticed that the letters were not all even but he ignored them, dismissing them as a product of Susan’s young age. \n
\nIn his haste to embrace the hope set out in the message, he doomed his people to be ambushed.\n
\n‘It is from the young girl,’ he announced to the crowd that had started to gather. More were hurrying to join the throng as word of the message spread. ‘She says that the Dalek people wish to make friends with us. Food will be left for us in their great hall. We are to collect it tomorrow!’\n
\nTemmosus remained reliably cautious. ‘Stop!’ he called as a hopeful murmur spread among the Thals. ‘How do you know you can trust the Daleks? Their ancestors waged a great war against us and destroyed our planet.’ He pointed at the petrified remains of a nearby tree. ‘They caused all of this devastation.’\n
\n‘But that was long ago,’ Alydon argued. The optimism on his people’s faces had been absent for far too long. They had to take this chance of building their world into a better future for everyone on it – both Thals and Daleks alike. ‘Now they wish to make friends with us, offer us food. There’s no reason not to believe their good intentions.’ Alydon could see that Temmosus didn’t believe him but he was leader and the choice was his. He had to choose to trust in a better future. He had to. ‘We will go to the city of the Daleks in the morning.’\n

\nCHAPTER SIX\n
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\nEscape to Danger\n
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\nIan noticed that as Dr Who’s physical strength recovered from the radiation sickness, his mental abilities also recovered their sharpness. He had inspected every inch of the cell holding their party prisoner. He tapped his finger on the wall and the door before tapping his foot on the floor. They all clanged slightly. He dropped to his knees with surprising agility and rapped the floor with his knuckles. Again it gave a hollow metallic sound. He nodded to himself, working through a theory, assessing the evidence that backed the idea and also contemplating anything that might prove him wrong.\n
\n‘The doors, the walls, the floor are all made of metal,’ Dr Who said eventually. ‘Perhaps this is the Daleks’ weakness.’ He slapped his hand on the floor in triumph, convinced that he had made a breakthrough.\n
\nBarbara clearly hadn’t made the same leap as her grandfather. ‘What do you mean?’\n
\nDr Who pushed himself back up to his feet and clasped his hands behind his back, looking very much like a professor lecturing his students. ‘Whenever they move, there is a familiar odour.’\n
\n‘I’ve noticed that,’ Barbara agreed. ‘I was trying to remember where...’\n
\n‘A fairground,’ Ian interrupted. ‘You get the same smell from the dodgem cars. Remember we went on them last week.’\n
\n‘It’s ozone,’ Susan explained to Ian. ‘It’s made by electric sparks.’ She had obviously kept the details simple for his benefit.\n
\n‘Electric power,’ Dr Who confirmed, fairly bouncing with excitement. ‘Not the sort of electricity we know, of course, or we would be killed by it, but some form of static electricity.’ He waved a hand at the door and whatever Daleks were in the city beyond. ‘Those armour suits they wear are actually machines that pick up their power through the metal of the floor. Now, if we could insulate those machines from their power source, they would be helpless.’ He smacked one hand into the other and shuffled back to the door. All signs of illness were now long gone. His eyes shone with life, determination and a fierce intelligence.\n
\nThis was the Dr Who Barbara had told Ian about.\nBarbara herself was now following her grandfather’s reasoning with ease. ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘but what can we use as an insulator?’\n
\nThat was a fair point, Ian thought. The room was entirely constructed of metal.\n
\n‘My cape!’ Susan said suddenly, lifting the cloak Alydon had given her as protection from the storm.\n
\n‘Susan!’ Dr Who clapped his hands together and hurried across the cell, taking the cloak from his grand-daughter. ‘I think you’ve got it,’ he said, inspecting the garment. ‘It’s made of some sort

of plastic material. It should be thick enough.'\n
\nIan felt the need to bring some reality into the plan. While they might have a way to disable a Dalek, actually putting that into operation was a far from simple prospect. 'Sure,' he said with a hint of sarcasm, 'it's going to be easy, isn't it?' He bowed extravagantly. 'What do we say?'
"Excuse me, Mr Dalek, would you care to move onto this cape?" I don't…'\n
\nThe doors swung open revealing a blue and grey drone Dalek just inches behind him. 'Move back from the door!' it ordered.\n
\nIan hurriedly did as he was told. \n
\nThe Dalek turned its eye stalk to Susan. 'You, take the food.'\n
\nSusan hurried across and took the tray. The door began to close. Before it could shut, she spoke to the Dalek. 'We're dehydrated from the sickness. We need more water, please.'\n
\nThe doors swung open again. The Dalek paused, apparently in silent communication regarding the request.\n
\n'Very well,' the Dalek grated. 'More water will be brought in one of your hour time units.'\n
\nThe shutter doors swung shut, enclosing the captives again.\n
\n'That was clever of you, Susie,' Dr Who said, clapping his hands together. 'That gives us another opportunity with the doors open.'\n
\nBarbara took the tray of food from Susan and put it on the ledge. The young girl had been right to ask for water. There was none on the tray. The tray contained four bowls of unappetising coloured sludge. 'They always stay outside in the corridor,' she said, sighing.\n
\n'You can't get near them without being seen,' added Susan.\n
\nFrustration at the impotence of their position boiled in Ian. 'Couldn't we smash that lens in their eye?' he asked. 'Or throw Susan's cape over it?'\n
\n'Then what do you use to insulate it from the floor?' Susan asked reasonably.\n
\nIan grunted. As usual, Susan had a point, and that meant they were back at Square One.\n
\n'I think I've got it!' Barbara's voice exclaimed from the ledge. They all turned to look at her. She had lifted a handful of the muddy brown food from the tray.\n
\nThey all understood what Barbara was thinking.\n
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\nJust under an hour later, Dr Who was finalising preparations. He glanced at his pocket watch. 'If he's on time, he'll be here any second. All ready, lad?' He looked at Ian, who nodded and waved his Ronson lighter. Dr Who indicated for Susan to alter her position slightly so that she was still near the door but not directly in front of it. 'Just a little farther away from the door, Susan, dear. Too close will make him suspicious.' Finally his attention focused on his older grand-daughter. 'All ready, Barbara?'\n
\nBarbara nodded, kneading the muddy brown Dalek food between her fingers.\n
\nDr Who looked around his little party again and nodded reassuringly. They all knew the planning was good – or at least the best they could possibly come up with in the situation. All

they could do was try to execute it as best they could and hope that it worked.\n
\n‘He’s coming,’ Ian said, from his position to the side of the door. He quickly kneeled and slid the sturdy metal lighter into the doorway, pressed tightly against the door’s frame. As the shutters began to swing upwards he slid the lighter under the rising door and spun away, quickly rising to his feet.\n
\nA blue and grey drone Dalek – whether it was the same one as before they couldn’t tell – was in the doorway, another tray clamped in its pincer. ‘Take this,’ it grated to Susan. She took the tray and backed away, setting the tray down on the bench. ‘It must last you till tomorrow,’ the Dalek added before backing away from the doorway.\n
\nThe shutters swung down but just before the doors closed the progress of one side of the metal door was blocked by Ian’s lighter and the doors swung up, opening again.\n
\nThe Dalek’s eye stalk jerked, looking around the cell in apparent confusion. ‘What is happening?’\n
\nThe doors swung down, but then swung up again as one side again hit the lighter.\n
\n‘Why do the doors not close?’ the Dalek screeched, its voice rising in pitch. It moved ominously into the cell. ‘Why do the doors not close?’\n
\nBarbara had moved to the metal creature’s side. ‘Dalek!’\n
\n‘What?’ The Dalek’s eye stalk turned to Barbara, and saw only her hand as it slammed the thick muddy food over the eye’s lens blinding it. ‘Help me!’ it screeched. ‘Help! Help me!’\n
\nIan and Dr Who moved in close to the Dalek, getting tight against its shell so that the arms were useless against them. Even though they had a solid grip on the blinded Dalek’s body the machine was incredibly powerful. It spun and twisted, trying to dislodge them. Its pincer arm lashed around and its gun fired indiscriminately. Barbara and Susan dodged out of the field of fire just in time to avoid the blasts.\n
\nDr Who scooped up the broken piece of Dalek camera and handed it to Ian, who jammed it into the end of the Dalek’s gun arm. If it fired, the energy would be deflected straight back into the metal casing.\n
\nThe Dalek’s cries for help rose in pitch as it realised it had been disarmed. ‘Help me! Help!’ it shrieked hysterically.\n
\nThe Dalek spun and pushed back, jamming Dr Who against a wall and loosening his grip. It spun, sending Ian reeling into a wall. He didn’t have time to react before the Dalek’s pincer had him pinned against the wall. The claw pushed up his chest until it pressed hard into his throat, beginning to crush his windpipe.\n
\nAbruptly it was gone. Dr Who and Barbara were on the Dalek, pulling it away from Ian. The metal monster fought hard to knock them loose. Ian threw himself into the battle again, pushing at the Dalek with all his weight, trying to force it towards the cape, which Susan had spread on the floor.\n
\n‘Help me! Help!’ the Dalek wailed again. ‘Prisoners trying to escape! Help me! Cannot see

them!’\n
\nThe pincer arm swung in an arc, barely missing Susan’s head. She moved around behind the Dalek and joined the others in pushing it towards the cloak.\n‘Cannot see them! Help! Cannot see them! Help! Help me! Quickly!’\n
\nBarbara pointed at the floor. The cloak had become rucked up like an old rug. ‘Grandfather!’\n
\nThe old man nodded and pointed urgently at the cloak. ‘You deal with it, Barbara. I’ve got him!’\n
\nBarbara quickly did as she was told, smoothing the cloak again before returning to the battle with the Dalek.\n
\n‘They must not get away! Help me! Help me!’\n
\nWith a final burst of energy, the entire machine was forced onto the cloak so that none of the Dalek’s metal surface was in touch with any part of the room. Its limbs all drooped instantly and the voice tailed away weakly as if its batteries had run out. ‘Help me! Help meeeee!’ The voice faded to nothing.\n
\nAll four captives gasped for breath and looked pensively at the Dalek. It had stopped moving and was completely still.\n
\n‘It worked,’ Dr Who said breathlessly. ‘Well done, everybody.’\n
\nSusan moved in for a closer look at the Dalek ‘Do you think it’s dead?’\n
\nDr Who quickly moved the girl away from the Dalek. There was no way to know the exact state of the creature. ‘Now, you and Barbara go and keep watch on the corridor.’ While his grand-daughters reluctantly obeyed and slipped out into the corridor to keep watch, Dr Who patted Ian on the shoulder and led the younger man back to the Dalek. ‘Come along, lad.’\n
\nIan rubbed at his throat, which still showed red marks from where the Dalek’s pincer had pressed on it.\n
\nDr Who was already looking around the Dalek’s casing. ‘How does this thing open?’\n
\nHe found some kind of release mechanism and a moment later, the top section of the machine swung forward on a hydraulic hinge.\n
\nBoth men looked inside the Dalek and them in horror at each other. Both appeared sickened by what they saw inside the Dalek. Susan ran towards the open Dalek, eager to see inside, but was stopped by her grandfather. He caught her shoulders and sent her back into the corridor beside Barbara.\n
\nThe old man glanced at Ian and nodded towards one corner of the cell. ‘Move it over to there.’\n
\nBetween them Ian and Dr Who rolled the open Dalek off of the cape and into the corner.\n
\n‘Careful!’ Barbara called back. ‘It could still be dangerous!’\n
\nBoth men ignored her. They were transfixed by the seething horror inside the Dalek. ‘Pick up the cape,’ Dr Who said. ‘We need to take it out. Can you manage it?’\n
\nIan swallowed and ran his tongue over suddenly dry lips, but he did as he had been instructed,

reaching into the Dalek with the cloak. A few moments later he pulled the cloak out. This time it was obviously heavy and filled by something bulky and moving.\n
\n‘Put it over there,’ Dr Who said, indicating an adjacent corner of the cell as far from them as was possible inside the confines of the small room.\n
\nIan hurried to the corner and dropped the bundle, obviously eager to be rid of it as soon as possible. ‘Now what?’ he asked, returning to Dr Who.\n
\nThe old man tapped the Dalek casing enthus-iastically. ‘Now you get inside.’\n
\n‘What for?’ Ian choked.\n
\nThe old scientist’s enthusiasm hadn’t waned even though Ian was clearly far from eager to get into the Dalek. ‘Pretend you’re a Dalek,’ he said. ‘If we meet anyone, you’re taking us to be questioned.’\n
\nIan was still unconvinced. ‘Yeah, but what if they find out it’s me inside this thing?’\n
\nDr Who was unconcerned. ‘We’ll be no worse off than we are now.’ He tapped the casing again. ‘Come along,’ he said encouragingly, ‘get inside, lad! Speed is essential!’\n
\nIan looked far from happy but reluctantly clambered into the Dalek’s metal casing.\n
\n‘Hatch coming down,’ said Dr Who, slamming the top of the Dalek back into place and reattaching the lock.\n
\n‘Now I can’t see anything,’ Ian said from inside the casing, his voice rasping and grating like a Dalek’s.\n
\n‘What-what?’ Dr Who asked, giving the locking catch at the back of the Dalek a final check to ensure that it was properly closed.\n
\n‘I can’t see anything,’ Ian’s distorted voice said.\n
\nBarbara ran back into the cell. ‘The eye,’ she said. ‘I covered it with food, remember.’ She quickly wiped the food away from the eye stalk’s lens and cleaned the remainder away with a handkerchief. \n
\n‘That’s better,’ Ian rasped. ‘Hey, this thing’s full of controls in here. Should I try a few?’ He sounded considerably more at ease now that he was settled inside the Dalek casing and able to see.\n
\n‘Oh, for heaven’s sake, no,’ Dr Who answered quickly. ‘Don’t touch a thing! We’ll move you.’ The old man was already pushing Ian’s Dalek casing towards the doorway. ‘Ready, Barbara?’ \n
\n‘Yes,’ his grand-daughter nodded.\n
\n‘Right, on with it,’ said Dr Who, and between them, he and Barbara pushed the Dalek containing Ian Chesterton out into the corridor.\n
\nNone of the former captives looked back into their cell. If they had done so they would have seen Alydon’s cloak twitching as the creature Ian had pulled out of the casing tried to free itself from the garment. One hideous green scale-covered hand managed to push out from under the cloak. The three webbed fingers twitched convulsively and then were still.\n
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\nDr Who and Barbara had taken up positions on either side of Ian’s Dalek, each using one of the machine’s arms to direct and propel him. Because she had most experience of moving in the Dalek city, Dr Who relied on his younger grand-daughter to plot the route of their escape. \n
\n‘Susan, show us the way the Daleks took you when you went back to Tardis,’ the old man said.\nSusan nodded and took the lead. ‘All right.’ She led them along a corridor apparently constructed of some kind of shimmering metal. ‘Turn left at the end of the corridor,’ she said confidently. ‘This is the way I came.’ She skipped ahead a few steps and peered quickly around the corner at the end of the corridor before hurrying back to the others. ‘It’s just like I remember. There’s a big door with a Dalek on guard. Beyond that door is the lift.’\n
\nDr Who nodded firmly. This was the most important moment in their escape. If they failed now, all would be lost. ‘Now it’s up to you, lad. Courage.’ He patted the top of the Dalek encouragingly.\n ‘Ouch,’ Ian rasped in his Dalek voice.\n
\nNobody was sure if he was trying to be funny or not. Susan and Barbara exchanged an exasperated look.\n
\n‘Ooh, sorry,’ Dr Who said automatically. He glanced at his grand-daughters who gave nods confirming that they were ready. ‘Here we go.’\n
\nSusan waited at the end of the corridor. When the Dalek guarding the lift turned its eye stalk to the other end of the corridor, she stepped out and started walking along the corridor towards the lift. Behind her, Barbara and Dr Who moved just ahead of Ian’s Dalek. Each of them had trapped one of the Dalek’s arms between their elbows and their sides. Barbara had managed to be subtle about it but Dr Who had gone further by giving the impression that the Dalek was forcing him along the corridor. They had almost reached the lift when the guard Dalek spun to face them. ‘Stop,’ it rasped.\n
\nIan answered instantly, his voice flattened and mechanised by his Dalek casing. ‘The prisoners have been called for questioning.’\n
\n‘I have not been informed.’ The Dalek sounded suspicious and vaguely offended that something was happening without its knowledge. ‘Wait.’ It turned towards a communication panel on the wall.\n
\nIf the Dalek reported to its superiors, their escape was over. It was Susan who saved the moment for them. She ran towards the Dalek, trying to dodge past it so she could escape along the corridor. ‘I won’t go! I won’t!’\n
\nThe Dalek spun and the longest of its arms shot out. The sucker on the end slammed into the wall ahead of Susan, stopping the girl in her tracks. \n
\n‘Halt her! Halt her!’ Ian grated out. ‘Help me get them inside.’\n
\nThe guard Dalek manoeuvred a sullen and resisting Susan into the lift. By the time it turned back to what it believed to be a fellow Dalek, Dr Who and Barbara had pushed and pulled Ian into the broad elevator, and turned him to face the Dalek.\n
\n‘Shall I help you take them to the fourth level?’ the Dalek said.\n

\n‘No,’ Ian answered emotionlessly. ‘Close the doors.’\n
\nThe Dalek did as it was instructed, gliding out of the lift and operating the door control. The shutter slammed closed.\n
\nAs soon as the doors were securely shut, Dr Who hurried to a glass control panel and smashed his elbow into it. He pulled and yanked at the connections inside until flames and sparks showed the doors to be jammed.\n
\n‘That was clever of you, Susie!’ he congratulated his grand-daughter. ‘Now, we must get moving.’\n
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\nHaving completed its task of closing the door, securing the prisoners with their Dalek escort, the guard Dalek reported to its commander. ‘I have just passed the prisoners into shaft seven.’\n There was the briefest pause before the controller Dalek replied. ‘Stand by.’\n
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\nIan’s Dalek had been man-handled into the middle of the lift. ‘Can you get me out of this thing?’ he asked. ‘It’s hot in here.’\n
\n Dr Who reached round to release the locking mechanism holding the domed top of the Dalek in place. It refused to move. He tried again but the lock was solidly jammed. He put his shoulder to the top of the casing and heaved.\n
\n‘There is no movement order for the prisoners.’ The Dalek controller’s voice rasped out of the communicator at the guard Dalek. ‘Hold them.’\n
\nThe guard spun and sped to the lift door, hate fuelling every movement.\n\n
\n‘Hurry up and get me out of here!’ Ian sounded as if he was beginning to panic. Barbara couldn’t blame him. There was no way they could bluff their way out of the entire Dalek city with him jammed in that Dalek.\n
\n‘We’re trying, lad!’ Dr Who reassured the younger man, heaving again at the top of the Dalek casing with the vigour of a man half his age.\n
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\nThe guard Dalek spun away from the lift door, enraged that it had been unable to open the shutters. ‘The door is locked. They must have fused it.’\n
\n‘Emergency alarm!’ the controller said. \n
\nA second later the sound of an electrical sounding bell filled the corridor.\n
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\nThe alarm was also loud inside the lift.\n
\n‘What was that?’ Ian asked.\n
\n‘An alarm bell,’ Dr Who answered quickly. ‘They know we’ve escaped!’\n
\nBarbara and Susan had joined Dr Who in trying to force the top of the Dalek loose. ‘Try to push it up from the inside,’ Barbara suggested.\n
\n‘What do you think I’ve been doing?’ Ian said irritably. The anger made him sound more like a

genuine Dalek than ever.\n
\nDr Who ignored the younger man’s frustration. ‘Well, try harder, lad!’\n
\nThe guard Dalek turned as it sensed movement behind it. Another Dalek was approaching. In place of a sucker arm or pincer this Dalek had an arm that was some kind of blowtorch. Obviously orders had been given to cut through the door.\n
\nThe guard felt the hope that orders had been given to exterminate the prisoners. That hope gave the guard more energy.\n
\nThe blowtorch sparked and the door began to glow.\n
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\nTo Dr Who’s disappointment, his little party weren’t actually inside the lift. As Susan pointed out the lift itself lay beyond another door. What they were inside was some kind of large holding chamber which led into the lift. The old man mused that it might be a way of containing prisoners before or after a journey in the lift.\n
\nAs they pushed Ian’s Dalek towards the lift’s entrance, a crackling sound came from behind them. A corner of the door leading out to the corridor was beginning to glow white hot. ‘They’re cutting through the door!’ he said. As he watched, the metal went from white hot to molten, little growing rivulets of liquid metal running down the inside of the door as the torch made steady progress across it. \n
\nThe Dalek bumped to a halt as Dr Who pushed it towards the lift. Looking for the obstruction he saw that the bottom of the lift wasn’t level with the floor. ‘The lift has stopped just short of the floor. We’ll never get him in.’ Despite his protest that there was no chance of success Dr Who put all his energy into trying to heave the Dalek into the lift. ‘We must try.’\n
\nDespite their efforts, they simply couldn’t get Ian’s Dalek into the lift.\n
\n‘Leave me!’ Ian rasped. ‘There’s no sense in us all being captured.’\n
\n‘No!’ Barbara snapped automatically, but Ian ignored her protest.\n
\n‘Leave me!’ he repeated forcefully.\n
\nBarbara’s reply was every bit as strong. ‘No!’\n
\n‘We might make better progress pulling him inside than pushing,’ Dr Who said, hurrying his grand-daughters into the lift. ‘On three, pull. One, two... three.’\n
\nAll three heaved backwards with all their strength but the Dalek again only struck the raised floor of the lift. The impact jarred the Dalek from their hands and Susan staggered backwards, her arm swishing past a sensor on the wall. An instant later the lift was on its way upwards. \n
\nBefore Barbara could explain anything to Ian, the lift had already moved up and out of sight, leaving the Dalek alone in the room.\n
\nIan turned to face the entrance to the corridor. Molten metal was dripping down half of the door. \n
\nHe was almost out of time.\n
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\nThe lift went up several floors before it stopped at what looked like a small observation area. Like all of the other rooms in the city, the walls were made of some kind of metal.\n
\n‘How long will it take to cut through that door?’ Barbara asked urgently.\n
\nDr Who quickly ushered his grand-daughters out of the lift. ‘Not very long,’ he admitted nervously. He knew the situation below was bleak for poor young Chesterton. \n
\n‘But even if he does get out,’ Barbara protested, ‘he’s stuck down there! This is the only way of escape!’ She looked desperately at the old man, willing him to have just one more incredible idea. ‘Grandfather, we can’t just leave him!’\n
\nDr Who’s mind was furiously racing through possibilities, but none of them seemed to bring an answer. ‘What can we do?’ he exclaimed in frustration. ‘What can we do?’\n
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\nThe engineer Dalek completed its task by cutting through the doorway. It moved quickly aside, allowing the guard Dalek to push the remains of the door aside with its pincer arm. The metal bent and toppled. Ian’s Dalek was alone inside the ante-room, looking directly at the door.\n
\nThe guard Dalek didn’t wait for orders. It saw its enemy and blasted it with the full force of its weapon.\n
\nIan’s Dalek exploded.\n
\nThe two Daleks swept in, eager to see the death that had been caused. \n
\nEven before it opened the top of the defeated enemy, the guard Dalek knew something was wrong. There wasn’t enough smoke and its sensors didn’t detect the exhilarating stench of burning flesh. It knew that the Dalek casing was empty.\n
\n‘Look!’ The engineer Dalek’s eye had turned to a display panel by the lift’s door, which showed the lift was going upwards. \n
\n‘Stop it!’ the guard screeched. ‘Stop it! Bring it down!’\n\n
\nDr Who’s party had been horrified to see the lift summoned back down to the level they had just left. They had hoped it would bring their friend but in their hearts they had expected to see the sinister shape of a Dalek when the lift returned. The relief was palpable when Ian’s tousled head came into view. He smiled a silly, relieved grin at them. \n
\n‘Oh, Ian!’ Barbara exclaimed.\n
\n‘How did you manage it?’ Dr Who asked delightedly.\n
\nBefore Ian could answer the lift dipped and began heading back down. Dr Who and Barbara each caught one of Ian’s arms and helped him clamber out of the lift before it disappeared out of view again.\n
\n‘We must find a way out,’ Dr Who said urgently. He knew that the lift would be back quickly enough and this time it would contain Daleks. Ian had talked about them being recaptured but the old scientist knew that it was more likely that the Daleks would exact a far higher price. They had attacked and probably killed a Dalek in the cell. He had no doubt that they would be shot on sight, and this time the Daleks would not be simply aiming to temporarily incapacitate them. If

they didn’t find a way out they were all dead.\n
\nThat thought was briefly thrown from his mind. Looking out of the windows he could see the edge of the city several storeys below. A large party of men and women were making their way into the city carrying large, empty baskets. ‘The Thals are coming for their food supplies,’ he said. ‘They’re walking straight into an ambush.’\n

\nCHAPTER SEVEN\n
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\nThe Ambush\n
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\nIn the small room below, the guard Dalek waited impatiently for the lift to arrive. It seethed with hatred for the escaped prisoners. It turned as another Dalek approached.\n
\n‘Our orders are not to capture them,’ the newcomer grated out. ‘They are to be completely destroyed. They must not escape.’\n
\nThe excitement and anticipation lifted the guard Dalek’s voice an octave. ‘They must die. I understand.’\n
\nEager for the slaughter to begin, the guard glided into the lift and operated the control to take it up after the fugitives. \n
\n \n
\nSusan had been left watching the display monitor for the lift. ‘Hurry up! It’s on its way back up.’\n
\nEveryone knew what that meant for them all. They all looked around, desperately searching for an exit or a way to stall the lift and the Dalek it undoubtedly carried.\n
\nOne large solid piece of computerised equipment rested against a wall. Dr Who and Ian saw it at almost exactly the same time.\n
\n‘Hey!’ Ian yelled, gripping one end of the machine. ‘Give me a hand!’ Dr Who began pushing at the other end. Moments later Barbara and Susan joined in the effort of pushing the machine towards the open lift shaft. The light showed that the lift was almost half of the way to their level.\n
\n‘Now,’ said Dr Who, ‘one, two, three!’\n
\nThey all heaved, pitching the machine into the shaft. Seconds later there was a horrific crash and the sound of tearing metal followed by the terrible screech of an injured Dalek as the lift plummeted downwards. A few more seconds brought the crash of the lift and its Dalek passenger smashing to the floor.\n
\nThe lift was out of action but the danger was far from over.\n
\n‘We must warn the Thals!’ Dr Who exclaimed urgently.\n
\n \n
\nFar below and unaware that they were walking into a trap, the Thals moved through the city. The shutters across all the doors bar one were securely closed. That one doorway, however, was brightly lit as a beacon for the Thals to follow. As was fitting, their leader Alydon was at the front of the party of Thals. He looked back to his people and smiled encouragingly before turning to go in through the open doorway. \n
\nTemmosus caught his friend’s arm and shook his head in a final, silent plea for Alydon to think

again. \n
\nAlydon simply smiled reassuringly and led the way into the Daleks' building, indicating for his people to follow. Temmosus hesitated a moment before following his friend into the metal structure. Encouraged by their leader and his friend going into this strange metal world, the Thals followed them inside, looking in wonder at the unnatural interior of the Dalek city.\n
\nDozens of them filed into the building carrying woven baskets to carry away food from the Daleks.\n
\n \n
\nNone of the Thals knew the horror that was waiting for them. The Daleks had watched their approach and had laid out food in the great central control room of their city before slowly and deliberately gliding back out of view, waiting. \n
\nWaiting in ambush.\n
\n \n
\nHigh above the Thals but in the same building, Dr Who had found a sealed door on the far side of their floor.\n
\n'Help me open it!' he said urgently to Ian.\n
\n'Got it!' Ian's fingers forced themselves between the shutters and he and Dr Who prised the heavy metal shutters apart and put their shoulders to keeping the doors open enough for Barbara and Susan to squeeze through. On a count of three, both Ian and Dr Who rolled through the doorway after the girls and the shutters clanged shut behind them. \n
\nIan rubbed his aching shoulder to get some feeling back into it but Dr Who had already moved to the next set of doors. 'Another lift,' he said and waved a hand over a sensor. 'This should summon it.'\n
\n'What if it's a trap?' Barbara asked.\n
\nDr Who looked at his grand-daughter ruefully. 'That, my dear, is a risk we must take.'\n
\n \n
\nAlydon walked slowly into what looked like a huge hall full of shining lights and complex, incompre-hensible machinery. It was like nothing he had ever seen before. It felt alien to him. He wondered what kind of creature would be content to live in a place so lacking in any kind of individuality or personality. The Thals had very little but what they did have was cared for, handed from generation to generation with each new family member adding to it and embellish-ing it with their story. This city had none of that. It was cold, emotionless, heartless.\n
\nWhat kind of creature would live in a place like this?\n
\nNo, he couldn't afford to think that way. The Daleks had offered them food. That was a place to start rebuilding the planet and he saw the containers that would surely contain the food in the middle of this great room.\n
\nGlancing back, Alydon saw that his people were hanging back at the door to the huge room. They must have felt the same trepidation that he did. Only Temmosus – despite his reservations

about this course of action – had followed Alydon into the room. He was curious as he always was, but Alydon could also see the concern in his friend's face.\n
\nAbruptly, a pair of metal shutters on a door at the far end of the room opened. Four people stood there. One was the girl, Susan, and the others looked like the people he had glimpsed with her in the forest.\n
\nThe oldest of Susan's party, a white-haired old man, shouted loudly, 'It's a trap! Go back! Run!'\n
\nBefore Alydon could react, large metal creatures glided out from hiding all around the room. Two converged on Temmosus. Energy pulsed from the smaller stick arms in the middle of their metal cases. Steam hissed as the energy superheated the air. Temmosus glowed and screamed as the energy enveloped him. He twitched and danced horribly, his dying body only held up by the energy of the weapons before he dropped, smouldering, to the metal floor.\n
\nThe Thals were already running, abandoning their baskets as they fled through the metal corridors out onto the metal platform beyond and then scrabbling their way down onto the dusty plain below. Somehow Susan and her companions had escaped around the back of the Dalek building and managed to join the Thals' flight. They ran for their lives, slowed by the treacherous ground but they kept running until they had reached the forest, and not stopping until Dr Who declared himself unable to continue.\n
\n'I need a moment to breathe,' he said, dropping down onto a log and gasping for air.\n
\nAlydon signalled for his people to stop and rest before turning back to the old man who was being tended by Susan. 'Thank you for warning us,' he said to Dr Who.\n
\nThe old man was still out of breath. 'I'm sorry... we were not in time to save your friend.'\n
\nAlydon tried in vain to make sense of what had happened. 'But I don't understand why,' he said. 'Why did they want to kill us? We came in peace.'\n
\n'You are different from them,' Dr Who said simply, 'and they are afraid of anything different.' He looked at Alydon with the sad eyes of a man who knew too well of the horrors he was talking about. 'And what people are afraid of, they try to destroy.'\n
\nDespite the attack and the death of his friend, Alydon still couldn't quite give up the idea that there might be some hope. \n
\nNeither could Dyoni, who had come to join him. 'If we could reason with them...' Alydon began.\n
\nDr Who shook his head firmly. 'They are beyond reason. They wish only to conquer.'\n
\n'What can we do, then?' Alydon asked desperately.\n
\nThe old man shook his fist vigorously. 'Why, fight them!'\n
\n'We're a peaceful people,' Alydon said simply. 'We see no reason to kill others.'\n
\nDr Who struggled to his feet and approached Alydon. 'But even when you know that they would kill you – and they planned to kill you all - you will not fight?'\n
\nAlydon struggled to see why the man didn't understand. Susan has said they were visitors to

this world. He had never considered such a thing possible but from this short conversation he knew that Susan had been telling the truth. These people just didn't know Skaro's history. 'The last war destroyed almost everything on this planet,' Alydon explained. He lifted a fallen branch from the ground. 'The war left it... like this.' He snapped the branch easily and squeezed the two broken parts, crumbling them into dust. He shook his head. 'We do not want another.'\n
\n'That is understandable,' Dr Who said, apparently in defeat. 'I wish there was some way we could help you.'\n
\nThe old man's sentiments were genuine, and his urge to help was well intentioned, Alydon had no doubts about that, but ultimately that changed nothing. They were Thals. The war had all but destroyed their world. He wouldn't be the one to lead his planet to the brink of destruction again.\n
\nHe gave Dr Who a sad look. 'You must go,' he said. 'We shall survive.'\n
\nDr Who looked far from convinced about that, and in truth, neither was Alydon. He looked on in confusion as Dr Who grasped one of his hands in his own and shook it up and down in some kind of farewell ritual. 'Goodbye. And good luck.' The white-haired old man made the shaking ritual with Dyoni's hand before bowing to kiss it in a show of respect. 'Madam.'\n
\nDr Who stood sadly before throwing his arms wide and ushering his companions into the blue box. 'Yes, time to go. Come along, children.' Obviously Barbara and Ian fitted the wise old man's description of children.\n
\nDyoni wondered how they could all fit inside. Alydon chose to explain later.\n
\nSusan was last to enter the box. She crossed to Alydon. She had decided to say her own farewell. He liked that integrity. It was something that made him appreciate how similar his people were to these strangers. They were from different worlds and yet they had formed these early stages of friendships. He held out his hand mirroring Dr Who's actions of a few minutes earlier.\n
\n'Goodbye,' he said.\n
\nSusan took his hand and shook it. 'Goodbye,' she answered, 'and thank you.' She turned and headed for the box, stopping only briefly at the door to wave back at Alydon. He waved in reply. A moment later she disappeared into the box and the doors closed.\n
\nAlydon had no idea how the box might travel but he was sure that he had seen the last of his new friends.\n\n
\nThe Black Dalek had retreated to one of the laboratories inside the Dalek city. It seethed at the escape of the Thals and of the other prisoners but it was intelligent enough to put that rage to the side temporarily. That was why it was the leader. It had the ability to order its thoughts at a higher level than the others. For now, the experiments taking place several levels below took priority.\n
\nThe red lieutenant glided towards its leader. 'The drug of the Thals has been duplicated,' it reported.\n

\nThe Black Dalek swept its sucker arm across a sensor and a huge screen flickered to life, showing five Daleks in a laboratory. They moved in an orderly manner, being treated one at a time with the Thal drug. ‘We will test it on this work section. If it is effective, we will discard these machines and go out and destroy the Thals.’\n
\nDespite the advances in its thought processes the Black Dalek positively bubbled with anticipation for hunting the Thals.\n
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\nIan sat in the rocking chair at the centre of Tardis, watching his three companions preparing the machine for the journey home. Each of the three moved around the controls, taking readings and making adjustments.\n
\n‘Check,’ Susan said, flipping a switch.\n
\nDr Who observed a read-out and twisted a dial. ‘Check,’ he echoed with a contented bob of the head. ‘Barbara?’\n
\nBarbara glanced at her readings. ‘Check.’\n
\nThat was apparently enough for Dr Who’s pre-flight routine to be completed. He gave a satisfied smile as he looked around the room and pressed the lever to operate the ship’s engines.\n
\nAn odd, rumbling alarm filled the room. \n
\nDr Who frowned and hurried back to his position at the controls. He inspected his readings and then quickly shuffled across to Barbara’s position and looked at her readings. He seemed satisfied and she reset her controls. ‘Check.’\n
\nThe old inventor had returned to his own position. ‘Check,’ he confirmed. He pushed the lever again, and again the room was filled with that rumbling alarm. He stood in the middle of the room, rocking back and forward on his heels. ‘This is most vexing,’ he muttered.\n
\n‘What’s wrong?’ Ian asked. ‘I mean, it’s obvious that something’s not working but what is it?’\n
\nA spark of realisation appeared in Dr Who’s eyes a moment before Susan’s voice echoed across the room.\n
\n‘The fluid link!’ she exclaimed.\n
\nDr Who was already hurrying to the panel that had once housed the fluid link. ‘You’re right.’ He thumped the panel with a fist. ‘The Daleks still have it. They took it from me.’\n
\n‘Oh, no.’ Barbara slumped at her position. ‘What are we going to do?’\n
\nDr Who straightened his back. ‘We must get it back,’ he said firmly.\n
\n‘How?’ Susan asked.\n
\nIan had to agree with the girl. How could they possibly get back a piece of equipment from who-knew-where in the heart of the Dalek city?\nDr Who turned towards the door. ‘Only the Thals can help us.’ Invigorated by the thought of action, Dr Who strode towards the door. As the older man pushed the door open, Ian thought that the dotty, bumbling old duffer persona had completely fallen away from Dr Who again. In its place was the driven, passionate intellect

Barbara had talked about.\n
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\nAlydon had been surprised to see the blue box's doors open once again and to see Dr Who stride out with the rest of his party close behind. He had been in the process of working out how to tell their people that they would have to move on, though in truth he had no idea where they would go. Dr Who explained the problem with his craft quickly and efficiently. \n
\nAlydon was sympathetic but his position hadn't changed regarding his people confronting the Daleks. 'We'd like to help you,' he said earnestly as they walked slowly through the Thal camp. 'You saved many of our people but we do not wish to kill others.' He looked at his people, pausing at the sight of a young child sleeping on her mother's shoulder. 'And I do not want any of my people to be killed.'\n
\nDr Who was equally understanding. It was Barbara who continued. 'Supposing the Daleks come out of their city and attack you?' she asked. \n
\nAlydon walked away without answering. 'They could find a way of getting out of the city,' Dr Who said, following him. 'They have weapons, you have none.'\n
\n'We will not fight again,' Alydon repeated firmly. 'We will not fight.' He was convinced that he was right. He had to be. They couldn't risk destroying their world. But as he looked at his people, at the sleeping girl, Dr Who's words clawed at him. He had seen the Daleks. He had seen them murder Temmosus without warning or mercy. At the moment the Daleks were trapped in their metal city but if Dr Who was right, and the Daleks did somehow find a way to leave that city, there would be nowhere on the entire planet Skaro for the Thals to hide. \n
\nFor the first time, Alydon began to doubt his long-held beliefs.\n
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\nOn the large monitor screen, five Daleks spun and collided with the laboratory's equipment and slammed into each other.\n
\n'Out of control.'\n
\n'Help me. Help me.'\n
\n'Out of control.'\n
\nThe Black Dalek, accompanied as ever by its red subordinate, watched the Daleks spin on the screen. 'This is the section to whom we gave the drug.'\n
\n'It is obvious that we Daleks cannot use the drug of the Thals,' the red Dalek replied. 'We will not be able to leave these machines or go out of the city.'\n
\nThe Black Dalek had already observed the results of the test and gone through various readings. It had also formulated a new plan. A Dalek plan. 'Then we will destroy the Thals without leaving the city. We will explode another neutron bomb and increase radiation throughout the planet to a point where even the drug of the Thals will not be able to protect them from it.' It spun away and activated another panel from which it would control the bomb.\n
\n'When shall we explode the bomb?' the red Dalek asked eagerly.\n

\n‘Immediately.’\n\n

\nCHAPTER EIGHT\n
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\nTrapped on the Dead Planet\n
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\nWith an impasse reached between the Thals and Dr Who’s party, the only sensible option was for everyone to settle down for the night, to rest, and to hope that when they were all refreshed they might find a way for them all to move forward. While some tried to sleep, Dr Who and Alydon talked. The Thal leader had opened a large container which held some kind of metal papers, memory crystals and countless other forms of data storage. Dr Who pored over the ancient records eagerly. As ever he was fascinated by everything he learned.\n
\n‘These writings contain a complete history of our planet and our people,’ Alydon explained. He had hoped that if Dr Who could see the history of the Thals for himself he might understand their unwillingness to fight. He had hoped he might reassure himself that fighting was not an acceptable option.\n
\n‘Fascinating,’ Dr Who said, peering through his pince-nez at some kind of memory cube. ‘Absolutely fascinating.’ He put the cube aside and picked up a metallic parchment. ‘But these writings go back nearly half a million years. There was a great civilisation here once,’ he read.\n
\n‘Destroyed by the war,’ Alydon agreed.\n
\n‘But you can rebuild it, man,’ Dr Who encouraged forcefully. ‘Now, surely that is something worth fighting for.’\n
\nAlydon sighed. The old man just wouldn’t let the argument drop. He began to push himself to his feet but Dr Who stopped him, a surprisingly strong hand on his shoulder.\n
\n‘Why do you keep these writings?’ the inventor asked.\n
\nAlydon didn’t quite understand the question. Wasn’t it obvious what the writings were? ‘They’re the history of our people.’\n
\nDr Who nodded vehemently. ‘A history that will end with this generation unless you are prepared to fight for its survival,’ he said firmly. ‘One of your people was killed in the city. Many others could have been killed and will be unless you take action.’\n
\n‘We will not fight,’ Alydon said, hoping that his statement would bring an end to the conversation.\n
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\nIan had been sitting with Barbara and Susan a few yards away, watching Dr Who’s conversation with Alydon. He remembered living in London during the Blitz, and so he could understand Alydon’s reluctance to go to war. On the other hand, there had been a good reason for World War Two to happen. Indeed, he would argue that World War Two had had to happen. It had been necessary morally and militarily. The Nazis had wanted to expand, to subjugate, to rule. They had treated anyone who wasn’t a Nazi as less than they were. He had read about the

trials at Nuremberg with a sick feeling. Left unchecked, the Daleks would act in that same relentless way, wiping the Thals from the planet. While he had no love for the thought of war – and he felt guilty that the war would be fuelled by the slightly selfish motive of getting himself and his party home – Ian Chesteron was convinced that the Thals would have to fight or die.\n
\nHe saw that Alydon had moved away from Dr Who and was fixing the catch on a bracelet around Dyoni's wrist. How could he think of jewellery when his people's future was at risk?\n
\nA spark had appeared in Dr Who's eyes. Ian recognised that look by now. It meant the old fellow had thought of something. He was looking at Alydon and Dyoni too.\n
\nDr Who abruptly pushed himself up to his feet with that surprising burst of vigour he could sometimes possess. 'Lad,' he said, beckoning for Ian to join him and Ian did so as Dr Who moved over to confront Alydon again. There was a harder, colder expression Ian had never seen before on the old inventor's face.\n
\n'Young man,' Dr Who said sharply to Alydon in a clipped, brisk tone. 'Do you know why the Daleks held us as prisoners?' He didn't give Alydon time to answer. 'They wanted to experiment on us.' He swung an arm around the camp, pointing out various Thals, who were seated and now taking a keen interest in the conversation. 'Perhaps if we gave them one of your people instead, they might return the piece of equipment they took from me.' He glanced at Ian before extending a bony finger to point at Dyoni. 'Take her to the Daleks,' he told his young companion.\n
\nIan reacted instructively. 'You can't...' he began to protest, but he saw the gleam in Dr Who's eye and the scientist winked at him. He was up to something. Ian didn't like whatever it was but he went along with it. He trusted the old boy. Reaching down, Ian grasped Dyoni by the wrist and yanked her to her feet.\n
\n'We will take her to the Daleks,' Dr Who repeated.\n
\n'You cannot do this!' Alydon protested. He flew at Ian, wrenching Dyoni from his grasp and grasp and driving his fist into the human's jaw. Ian staggered and toppled into the sand, dazed. He shook his head to clear it. Alydon was rounding angrily on Dr Who. 'I thought you were our friends!'\n
\nThe old man was positively bouncing with energy as he hurried over to Alydon. 'You see?' he exclaimed in triumph. 'You will fight for something.'\n
\nAlydon's head dipped. He had been duped by a simple ruse and he knew it. He also knew that this simple trick had stripped away his own pretence of belief in his pacifist argument. 'Yes,' he said in defeat. 'Yes, we will fight.'\n
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\nThe Black Dalek and its red lieutenant continued to observe preparations for their plan on the large control panel in the Dalek control room.\n
\n'The neutron bomb will be ready for explosion in one Skaro day,' the red Dalek said\n
\n'That is good,' the Black Dalek grated in satisfaction. 'In one day, we will be sole masters of

this planet.’\n
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\nPersuading his people to fight had not been easy for Alydon. However a mixture of pragmatism, desperation and their innate trust of their leader meant that Alydon had been able to made his reluctant case for one final war for the Thals. This wasn’t something they did through choice but through necessity. It wouldn’t be a war of aggression or of conquest, but a desperate battle for their survival as a people.\n
\nThey had gathered near the campfire and Alydon had produced an ancient embroidered map from the box of records. The map was hundreds of years old, perhaps thousands, but it was the most accurate depiction they had of the area around the Dalek city and had been their guide through the long journey his people had undertaken to come to this part of their world.\n
\nAlydon used a crumbling stick as a pointer as he explained the details of the area to Dr Who and his companions. ‘The city is surrounded on three sides by rock walls,’ he said. \n
\nAnother Thal, a slightly nervous looking man named Ganatus added, ‘The fourth side is protected by mountains and a deadly swamp.’\n
\nDr Who’s bushy eyebrows rose with interest.\n ‘Deadly?’ Ian asked. ‘How do you mean?’\n
\n‘Some of the vegetation there still survives. Five of us went looking for food there one day,’ Ganatus explained. ‘Only my brother, Antodus, and I came back.’\n
\n‘What happened to the others?’ asked Dr Who.\nGanatus shifted uncomfortably and looked at his brother. ‘We found them,’ he said uneasily. ‘What was left of them.’\n
\n‘The swamp is alive with mutations,’ Alydon explained. ‘We have no idea if they evolved because of the radiation, if they were somehow created by the Daleks or if they have always been as horrific as they are. Whatever the answer is, it’s a perfect defence for the city.’\n
\nDr Who pushed himself up to his feet, still staring intently at the ancient map. ‘If we could get through that way, we could take the Daleks by surprise. Perhaps cause disruption to their city or their electricity supply.’\n
\nAlydon had considered that, but there was no way his entire party could get through the swamp without attracting the attention of the mutations in the water. ‘It’ll be too dangerous for all of us.’\n
\n‘For all of us, yes,’ Dr Who agreed.\n
\nThe old man was clearly thinking in a similar way to Alydon. ‘But we’ll send a small party that way, led by our brave friend.’ He clapped a hand down on a startled Ian’s shoulder. ‘The rest will come with us to try to find a way to approach the city.’\n
\n‘Oh,’ Ian said. He sounded like a man trying hard not to sound as frightened as he obviously was.\nAlydon tapped Ganatus on the shoulder. ‘You will go with him through the swamp,’ he said, also indicating Ganatus’ brother, Antodus and another young Thal name Elyon. Ganatus visibly shuddered at the thought of returning to the swamp.\n
\nHe wasn’t the only one nervous about the journey ahead. ‘Oh,’ Ian said again. He seemed to

be aware that Barbara was at his side. Alydon understood. Ian didn’t want to look weak or cowardly in front of his woman. It seemed that was something else these strangers had in common with his own people. Ian squared his shoulders and nodded. ‘All right.’\n
\n\nIn the Dalek city, the Black Dalek turned away with irritation from displays of preparations for the detonation of the neutron bomb and glided towards its red subordinate. ‘Why do you distract me?’ it demanded. ‘What have you to report?’\n
\nThe red Dalek spun away from another computer display. ‘Our long-range scanners detect movement by the Thals. A large party is approaching the desert through the forest.’\n
\nThat was unexpected. The Thals were pacifists, cowards. It made no sense for them to approach. However, it made no difference. The Daleks were always prepared. ‘Bring defence plan seven into operation,’ grated the Black Dalek. ‘Alert all sections.’\n
\n‘Another group is moving towards the rear of the city,’ the red Dalek added.\n
\n‘They cannot pass,’ the Black Dalek said confidently. ‘They will die. They will all die.’\n

\nCHAPTER NINE\n
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\nJourney into Terror\n
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\nThe swamp through which Ian’s party would have to pass merged into the edge of the petrified forest. Ian had known that they were approaching the swamp itself from the smell of stagnant water which began to permeate through the air. A few minutes later they passed the first living vegetation they had seen. Horrific gnarled, distorted trees showed that they too were mutated as they grew in strange unnatural shapes. The barks of these trees had an unhealthy putrid colour but they were undeniably alive.\n
\nAntodus and Ganatus were in the lead of the party by a few yards.\n
\nGanatus had been growing more fearful as they moved closer to the edge of the swamp. ‘We’ll never get through!’ His voice quivered with fear.\n
\nAntodus caught his brother by the arm. ‘We must try.’\n
\n‘But it’s full of mutations!’ Ganatus protested. ‘You know what happened before.’\n
\n‘You can keep your fears to yourself!’ Antodus snapped. ‘I don’t want you upsetting the others.’\n
\nIan and Barbara exchanged a glance. They had sensed the tension between the brothers growing and had let them move ahead to talk it out. Ian understood Ganatus’ fears. He was every bit as nervous himself. In truth he was more afraid for Barbara. He, at least, had done his two years of National Service in the Army. He had been a soldier. He had seen action in Oman. Barbara didn’t have that background. She was, however, by far the most intelligent of the small party and in this battle brains would be every bit as important as muscle. She might see something the rest of them would miss. That didn’t mean he worried about her any less, though, and he wondered just how fond of this woman he was becoming. She wasn’t just beautiful and clever, she was as brave as anyone he had known. She had insisted on being part of this expedition. Ian had been concerned about that but he had supported her argument. Barbara was brighter than him. She knew what she was doing.\nAntodus nudged his brother before speaking to the whole party. ‘Right, come on!’\n
\nAt this edge of the swamp, the ground was a mixture of solid patches of scrubland and pools of thick, bubbling mud. Foul-smelling steam settled over the wet mud. A hundred yards or so further into the swamp something akin to a green algae appeared on top of the muddy water and a rough, scrubby grass grew more freely on the ground.\n
\nAntodus had picked up the pace. Ian guessed it was to stop Ganatus having time to worry more about their surroundings. Ian appreciated the Thal’s reasoning but he was finding the pace difficult. Both he and Barbara were still recovering from the effects of the radiation sickness and he was relieved when Barbara asked for some respite. ‘Can we rest just a minute?’\n

\nAntodus looked towards Ian, who nodded. ‘All right,’ the Thal conceded. ‘Rest.’\n
\nBarbara and Elyon both slumped onto clumps of the scrub grass and sucked in deep breaths. \n
\nTo the side of the path, Ian saw that the water had grown clearer. Loosening his shirt he hurried to the water. ‘I could do with a wash. Just to freshen up.’ Kneeling by the water, he splashed some water up into his face. Though it wasn’t as clear as he had thought he felt refreshed as the water splashed his face. Shaking himself Ian dipped his face completely into the water. As his eyes became accustomed to the water he saw a movement. He saw…\n
\nIan threw himself backwards away from the water. ‘Hey!’ he yelled. ‘Hey! I saw a great big… thing in the water!’\n
\n‘What was it?’ Barbara asked.\n
\nIan shook his head vehemently. ‘I don’t know. I didn’t wait to find out.’ What he had seen had been more than enough to persuade him to steer well clear of the water.\n
\nBarbara looked at him with a real concern that made Ian feel that he was the luckiest man in the world. Any world. ‘Are you all right?’\n
\n‘Look!’ Antodus was maybe ten yards away, ahead and on the other side of the path where the water was shallow and clear. Four large metal pipes ran along the bottom of the lake, heading towards the Dalek city.\n
\n‘The Daleks must get their water from here,’ Barbara said.\n
\nAntodus agreed. ‘The pipes must go straight through the mountain, perhaps into the city of the Daleks.’\n
\nBarbara nodded enthusiastically. ‘If we could find that way...’\n
\n‘It’s our best plan,’ Ian agreed and Antodus nodded.\n
\n‘I’ll fill the water bags,’ Elyon said, taking the animal skin pouches from all of the others. ‘We’ll need them. I’ll catch you up.’\n
\n‘All right,’ Antodus agreed, leading the party away, following the pipes. ‘Come on!’\n
\nAntodus led the way, followed by Ian and Barbara, with Ganatus lagging behind them, often looking back for any sign of Elyon. His head was still craned back when the ground beneath him appeared to give way. His scream alerted the three who were ahead and they ran back towards him. \n
\n‘Help! Get me out!’\n
\nThe Thal was up to his waist in something between mud and quicksand. He had stepped into it because he had been focused on looking backwards. Ian and Antodus each grabbed one of Ganatus’ arms while Barbara grasped the front of his tunic. They heaved with all their strength but the mud was unwilling to release the Thal. \n
\nGanatus was beginning to panic as the mud pulled harder at him, sucking him down almost to chest level. ‘Get me out!’\n
\nIan thought desperately. ‘Behind him,’ he said. ‘And we all pull together.’\n

\nGanatus sank a little deeper and he yelled. Barbara and Antodus did as Ian instructed. All three moved behind Ganatus and gripped his arms tightly.\n
\n‘On three,’ Ian instructed. ‘One, two... three.’\n
\nThey pulled. Every muscle strained and burned as they put every ounce of energy into releasing Ganatus. With agonising slowness, the mud began to give up its grip and the Thal was pulled up and out of the mud. All four collapsed onto the ground gasping for breath.\n
\nGanatus had only just turned to thank the others when a man’s terrified scream echoed through the swamp. It was cut off abruptly.\n
\n‘Elyon!’ Antodus scrambled to his feet. ‘Stay with Barbara,’ he told Ganatus and grabbed Ian’s arm. ‘You, come with me.’\n
\nThe two men ran, retracing their steps towards the place they had left their companion.\n
\nIan didn’t have to look behind to know that Barbara would ignore Antodus’ words. She was running by his side and he could hear Ganatus behind them.\n
\nThree full waterbags marked the place Elyon had chosen to replenish supplies. Antodus arrived just ahead of Ian and Barbara. The water six feet out from the shore boiled and churned as something thrashed a few feet under the surface. The water was already roiling into a red and pink foam. Slowly, the thrashing subsided.\n
\nThe three stood in silence for a moment.\nGanatus joined them just as the water became calm. ‘What’s happened to Elyon?’\n
\nAntodus shook his head. Ian was unable to meet Ganatus’ eyes and he knew Barbara had already turned away.\n
\n‘Where is he?’ Ganatus demanded before his eyes dipped to the blood-stained water. ‘No.’\n
\nIan picked up the water bags. ‘Let’s get out of here,’ he said. ‘Come on.’ \n
\nTaking Barbara’s hand, Ian led them back on their path towards the Dalek city.\n
\n \n
\nPreparing for their attack on the Dalek city, the Thals were eating a hearty meal. Alydon had increased the portions allocated to his people. If they were successful they would find all the food they needed in the city. If they failed, there would be few returning to eat the food they did still have.\n
\nWhile the people ate, Dr Who and Alydon were again going over their plan of attack. \n
\nDr Who pointed a stick at the ancient, embroidered map. ‘The Daleks have the entire city surrounded with electronic instruments. Now, to get past the walls of the city, we must find a way of approaching them without being detected.’\n
\n‘But you’re a man of science,’ Alydon said confidently. ‘Surely you can think of a way.’\n
\nDr Who looked touched by Alydon’s show of confidence in him. ‘Yes, yes, but it’s not all that easy, young man.’\n
\nDespite his protests, Dr Who did indeed have the germ of an idea. If he could only find a way to make it work...\n

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\nThe water pipes continued for miles before they reached the base of a mountain, where they emerged from the water and went up the rocky mountain face. Ian wasn't embarrassed to admit he was relieved to be out of the swamp. \n
\n'Well, we're lucky they don't go underground,' Antodus said. 'We can follow them straight over the mountain.'\n
\nIan looked up the rocky face of the mountain, searching for some kind of path. 'How are we going to do that?'\n
\nFrom his pouch of supplies Antodus had pulled a long length of thin but strong-looking rope. 'We'll climb.'\n
\n'Climb?' Ian choked. He had never enjoyed heights.\n
\nAntodus looked at him in disappointment.\n'I was only thinking about Barbara,' Ian said, trying to recover his composure. He hadn't finished speaking when he wished he could have pulled the words back.\n
\nBarbara gave him a withering look before her expression softened. 'So you're not likely to follow Edmund Hillary, then,' she smiled. 'Don't worry. I've done some climbing.'\n
\nIan wasn't sure if it was machismo or if he simply didn't want to look weak in font of Barbara but he took her hand and followed Antodus.\n
\nThankfully the Daleks had cut a rough channel in the side of the mountain to house their pipes. The rocks inside that channel was rougher and offered regular hand and foot holds. Again with Antodus in the lead, they began to climb.\n
\nProgress was both painful and slow. The sharp edges of the rocks cut at the skin and tore at their clothes. Ian had always hated heights. He couldn't tell if there was a reason or an incident that caused it, but he just loathed heights. Even climbing ropes in PT when he did his National Service had made him feel sick. He focused on Barbara. If he thought about making sure she made it up the climb he wouldn't worry about himself. \n
\nIn truth, Barbara handled the climb remarkably well. She was careful but kept up a good pace and she didn't need anyone watching out for her. She refused Antodus' offer of being roped to him for safety. She hadn't been joking. She really did know how to climb. \n
\nAround half way up the ascent, vines began to trail down from higher up the mountain. Being the lightest, Barbara had been able to use the vines first and was soon up on a level with Antodus. Ian gritted his teeth and quickened his pace using both handholds and vines to make his way up towards the plateau above.\n
\n'Come on!' Antodus called down in encouragement.\n
\n'Easy for you to say,' Ian muttered. He was close to the top. Just a few more yards. How high did that mean he was now? It didn't matter. He wasn't looking down until he was on that plateau. Just keep climbing. His muscles ached. They burned. So did his lungs. It even hurt to breathe. He kept going. Kept climbing. Antodus was on that plateau. Keep climbing. Looking up, Ian saw

Barbara pull herself onto the plateau. Keep climbing, you're almost there. Two more handholds. Just two. He reached for a vine. It snapped under his weight. All the fears he had managed to push aside came flooding back. He was going to fall. He was going to die. Barbara would see him hit the rocks hundreds of feet below.\n
\nIan's hand lashed out and caught another vine. It held. He clung to it, gasping for a moment, then pulled himself up, taking the last few yards far quicker than he should. Heaving himself over the edge and up onto the plateau he lay gasping for air.\n
\n'What kept you?' Barbara asked.\n
\nIan opened his eyes and prepared a protest but she was smiling and at that moment he thought it was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.\n
\nAntodus was encouraging his brother to make the final few yards up to the top and Ian reluctantly pushed his aching body upright to help Antodus pull Ganatus up and over the edge to safety.\n
\nThey all sank to the ground, catching their breath and drinking water to recover. All too soon they were back on their feet, continuing their trek.\n
\n \n
\nThe Black Dalek's voice was being transmitted throughout the entire Dalek city as it addressed the whole Dalek race. A dozen drones, along with the red lieutenant Dalek were with the Black Dalek in the Control Room, listening to its announcement.\n
\n'This is the final battle,' it grated. 'When we explode the neutron bomb, there will be more radiation on this planet than even the Thals with their drug can survive.'\n
\nThe lights on the assembled Daleks flashed as they chorused, 'Destroy the Thals!'\n
\nThe Black Dalek continued. 'Tonight we will complete the war which our ancestors should have won many centuries ago.'\n
\nThe chorus came again, 'Destroy the Thals!'\n\n
\nThe plateau onto which Ian and his party had climbed proved not to be a plateau at all. Instead it was just a ledge maybe twenty yards wide which led to the next vertical face of the mountain. Again, there were millennia-old tunnels that had been cut into the mountain for the water pipes by the Daleks' ancestors untold years before.\n
\nThey followed the pipes to the entrance of one of the tunnels.\n
\n'Do you think we're almost there yet?' Barbara asked.\n
\nAntodus answered, 'I don't know. All we can do is follow the pipes.' He wound thin strands of dry, dead vine around the heads of sturdy sticks a few feet long and started striking two stones together to create the spark to light them.\n
\n'We must be over the worst of it by now, huh?' Ian asked. He flicked the top of his Ronson lighter and lit the torches in front of Antodus' astonished eyes. Ian didn't smoke but his dad had always told him to carry a lighter in case a woman did. Barbara didn't smoke either, he had been pleased to find out. He hated the smell of cigarettes. This trip to another world was the first time

his father’s advice to carry a lighter had actually come in handy.\n
\nAntodus handed one of the torches to Ian. ‘All right, come on,’ he said and started into the tunnel.\n
\nThe water pipes were bracketed to the walls of the tunnel which was, thankfully, more than high enough for them to walk in without stooping.\n
\nGanatus’ voice came from the back of the group. ‘Antodus. I...’\n
\nAntodus allowed Ian and Barbara to pass, dropping back to speak to his brother. ‘Yes?’\n
\nGanatus couldn’t look Antodus in the eye. His gaze was focused on the dusty floor of the tunnel. ‘I want to go back.’\n
\nAntodus shook his head in confusion. ‘We must get to the city!’\n
\n‘They could have scanners here,’ Ganatus said in a terrified voice. ‘I’m going back.’ He started back towards the tunnel mouth.\n
\nAntodus grasped his brother’s arms. ‘No, you’re not!’\n
\nGanatus struggled frantically, his voice rising in panic. ‘We’ll be killed! We won’t defeat them! We can’t beat the Daleks! You saw the weapons they have!’ He desperately pulled himself free and lurched backwards, crashing into the cave’s wall.\n
\nThe impact of Ganatus’ body must have triggered an ancient weakness in the cave’s structure. A cracking sound came from the roof of the cave and a huge, jagged slab of rock, detached itself from the ceiling. Antodus grabbed Ganatus and hauled him along the tunnel towards Ian and Barbara, who had stopped to wait for their companions. A moment later, the loose slab toppled from the ceiling into the tunnel. It didn’t damage the pipes but certainly blocked the tunnel.\n
\n‘What were you doing?’ Ian demanded.\n
\nAntodus ignored the question and glared at his brother. ‘Now there can be no question of going back!’ he snapped.\n
\nTurning quickly, Antodus strode away along the tunnel.\n
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\nDr Who gazed thoughtfully into the crackling flames of a campfire. The flickering light and sparking sounds from the fire helped his idea come together. It wasn’t quite right yet. He had a rough thought but how could he put it into operation? Was there anything in Tardis he could use? Perhaps if he dismantled the dimensional transduction coils? No, he didn’t have the equipment or the time to do that. The problem was that the ship wasn’t actually entirely complete yet. The basic components were all there now and clearly they had worked well enough to bring Tardis to Skaro. However, the refinements and so many of the additions to the ship that he might have found useful in this situation just simply weren’t in place yet. There had to be a way, though. There had to be.\n
\n ‘Grandfather!’ Susan’s voice shook him from his thought. He looked up to see his grand-daughter standing by him, an exasperated expression on her face. ‘I told you to watch the cakes! Now you’ve burnt them!’\n

\n Cakes? That definitely rang a bell. ‘Oh, yes, the cakes.’ She had asked him to... He looked down in panic. The black, charred remains of the cake mixture the Thals had given them smouldered on a slate griddle over the fire. ‘The cakes!’ he yelped, plucking the burned food from the griddle. They were beyond saving. ‘I am so sorry, Susan.’ As he looked up, an unexpected flash of light forced him to squint. Looking across he saw Dyoni and two other Thal women opening and closing boxes, putting supplies away. The insides of the boxes were lined with a shiny, reflective surface.\n
\nHe had it!\n
\nDr Who leaped to his feet and hurried across to Dyoni. ‘Madam!’ he exclaimed, almost breathless with excitement. ‘Pardon me, please. May I borrow that just for a moment?’ he said, pointing at the box.\n
\nDyoni looked surprised but agreed. ‘Of course.’\n
\n‘Thank you so much.’ Dr Who examined the interior of the box’s lid. The reflective lining was made up of overlaid panels of a shiny, polished material. Each of the panels was seven or eight inches across. He prised one free and scampered across to Alydon.\n
\n‘Young man,’ he said, positively glowing with excitement, ‘do you have any more of these mirrors? The ones from the boxes.’\n
\nAlydon appeared as bemused as Dyoni, who had followed Dr Who over. ‘Why, yes.’\n
\nDr Who punched the air with glee. ‘Get them, please,’ he said ‘Collect as many as you can.’\n
\nAlydon was still mystified. ‘Why?’\n
\nDr Who tapped the mirror in triumph. ‘They may be our way of getting into the Dalek city.’\n
\n \n
\nThe tunnel housing the Daleks’ water pipes had soon started to slope upwards. Very quickly the incline had become steep and challenging for Ian’s party as it made its way towards the Dalek city.\n
\nIan wiped a hand across his brow and swept sweat from his eyes. He wondered how much further they had to...\n
\nThe ground disappeared and his foot stepped into nothing. He yelped and hands caught him, pulling him backwards. The black stone floor abruptly stopped, replaced by an even blacker nothingness. \n
\nIan’s heart raced at the thought of how close he had come to plunging into the unknown. As his heart calmed and his breathing became more regular he heard the sound of flowing water far, far below. There was something else, too. Something in the water thrashed and roared. Something similar to whatever had got Elyon? He didn’t want to think about that. One thing was sure. Had he fallen, he would certainly have died.\n
\nHolding his torch high, Ian saw that the tunnel floor seemed to have collapsed, forming this gap. Below the collapsed floor the chasm down to the water widened until the darkness defeated the light of their torches.\n

\n‘The gap looks about six or seven feet,’ Barbara said.\n
\nIan looked at the pipes. They were arranged vertically in a stack. Using them to cross would be dangerous and difficult.\n
\nAntodus thrust his torch into Ian’s hand. ‘Here.’\nIan looked at the torch in surprise. \n
\n‘What are you going to do?’ Barbara asked.\n
\n‘Jump it,’ Antodus said, as if it was patently obvious.\n
\nIan tapped the rope Antodus carried coiled over his shoulder. ‘We’ll use this as a safety line.’\n
\nAntodus looked slightly offended by the idea of safety precautions for such a small jump but he gave in quickly. ‘I’ll go first,’ he said, tying one end of the rope securely around his waist.’ Without giving any warning Antodus took a couple of steps and leaped, landing safely on the far side of the gap with a few feet to spare. ‘Now you,’ he called to Ian.\n
\nIan had watched the Thal’s leap with amazement. Lyn Davies couldn’t have cleared the gap so easily off a short run, could he? ‘I think I need a longer run,’ Ian said backing away. He quickly tied the other end of the rope around his own waist and cleared the excess so that it wouldn’t tangle in his feet. Ignoring the thought of the great drop and the creatures in the water Ian ran. He planted his foot and pushed hard, landing beside Antodus, who caught him and stopped him from falling flat on his face. ‘Thanks.’\n
\n‘It was a good jump,’ the Thal answered.\nIan looked back across at Barbara. ‘Don’t worry,’ he called, ‘it’s easy.’\n
\nBarbara didn’t seem to be in any doubt about that. She caught the rope Ian threw across in one hand and in the same movement she threw the torch across to Ian. ‘Catch!’ He caught it slightly clumsily but held on. Barbara tossed the water bags across before focusing on the rope. She quickly tied the rope around her waist using what looked like some kind of sailor’s knot before backing off to give herself a run at the gap. ‘Coming over,’ she called.\n
\nShe ran and leaped, landing lightly beside Ian and Antodus, who quickly released the knot at Barbara’s waist and coiled it before throwing one end across to his brother.\n
\nGanatus made no attempt to catch the rope. He let it hit him on the chest and fall to the ground. He looked over the edge into the darkness stretching out below. \n
\nAntodus started pulling the rope back in ‘You must jump,’ he said. ‘It’s the only way. Now catch it!’ He had re-coiled the rope and threw it across again. This time Ganatus caught it, but clearly with an obvious reluctance. He slowly tied the rope around his waist before backing away.\n
\nIan understood Ganatus’ fear of falling. ‘Don’t worry,’ he said encouragingly. ‘It’s perfectly safe.’ He gave a slight tug on the rope, the other end of which was around his own waist. ‘Look, I’ll catch you.’\n
\nWarily, Ganatus took a hesitant run towards the edge. He jumped, only just reaching the far side of the gap. Even as his three companions reached to steady him, Ganatus began to topple backwards. His arms spiralled and flailed and he tumbled backwards into the darkness.\n
\n‘No!’ Barbara screamed.\n

\nAn instant later, the rope went taut and Ganatus' weight yanked Ian forward, hauling him towards the side of the ledge, and a fatal plunge to the water so far below.\n
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\nA large party of Thals slowly crept across the desert towards the edge of the Dalek city. At the base of the final slope up to the metal platform which marked the edge of the city, the Thals stopped. Spreading out, each of the Thals produced one of the pieces of the reflective material that had so excited Dr Who earlier. They turned the mirrors towards the city and began to move the reflective panels, deflecting light back onto the city and giving the metal a dancing, psychedelic appearance.\n
\nDr Who and Susan were at the fore of the Thal force alongside Alydon. They were all shining their mirrors on the city. 'Short-wave light radiations,' Dr Who explained. 'That should blind their cameras and confuse the detectors they use to observe the desert. If we can make them overload they won't know where we are.'\n
\nThey grimly continued their work.\n
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\nThe efforts of Dr Who and the Thals had not gone unnoticed. The Black Dalek and its red lieutenant observed a panel of nonsensical readings.\n
\n'They are attacking our instruments,' the red Dalek said in its monotone.\n
\nThe Black Dalek ran the problem through its mind. 'We can take them by surprise,' it said. \n
\nThe Daleks were always prepared to deal with an attack.\n
\nAt Dr Who's word that it was time, Alydon issued the order for the Thals to approach the city. The climbed the steep rock face towards the metal platform, all the time continuing to shine their mirrors onto the city, confusing its sensor equipment.\n
\nAgainst Alydon's protests, Dr Who and Susan were again to the fore as the Thals approached the edge of the metal.\n
\nThe ground moved. \n
\nIt wasn't a Skaroquake. The ground actually did move. A vertical white light appeared under the edge of the metal platform. The light widened. The rocky ascent to the city was splitting open, two sides of it moving apart to reveal a harsh, glaring white light behind it which illuminated the sandy plain. A row of Daleks were silhouetted against the light. Three more Daleks rolled out onto the metal platform, aiming their weapons down at the Thals. \n
\n'Stay where you are,' the leading Dalek rasped. 'Do not move.'\n
\nAlydon leaped to the side, away from the glare of the light and the Thals scattered, but having been at the front of the attacking group, Dr Who and Susan, along with two Thals, were directly in the sights of the Daleks weapons. They had no way to escape. All Dalek weapons turned on these four captives. \n
\n'Do not move. Do not move. You are our prisoners.'\n
\n \n

\nIan was being pulled over the edge of the ledge towards a certain death.\n
\nBarbara and Antodus both fought to keep hold of Ian and to pull him back but Ganatus was a big, heavy man. His weight was pulling both himself and Ian to their deaths.\n
\nAlydon's grip tightened on Ian's shirt as he slipped a little further over the side.\n
\nThe shirt ripped.\n
\nAntodus looked down, imploring his brother to climb. He saw the knife in Ganatus' hand, moving efficiently across the rope, just above his head.\n'No, Ganatus! No!'\n
\nThe knife cut through the rope and Ganatus dropped into the darkness. Without the extra weight pulling him down, Ian scrambled back onto the ledge and clambered to his feet and straight into a hug from Barbara that crushed the air from him. Antodus was desolate. Ian felt painfully guilty for being relieved to be alive when the Thal's brother had sacrificed himself.\n
\n'I'm sorry,' Ian began.\n
\n'Hey!' A voice called from the darkness. 'Get me out of here!'\n
\nAntodus looked bewildered. 'Ganatus?'\n
\nIan's guilt lifted. Ganatus was alive. 'He's all right!'\n
\n'I landed on a ledge,' Ganatus' voice echoed up. 'If you can tie that rope to something solid I can climb my way up.'\n
\nBarbara hugged Ian just a little tighter. 'That's a relief!'\n\n
\nDr Who and Susan had been violently separated from the Thals captured with them before being pushed and shunted through the corridors to the main control room in the Dalek city. They were forced under the same column of bright light that had earlier been used to scan them.\n
\nThe Black Dalek turned, scrutinised them and then turned away.\n
\nDr Who was not ready to be ignored. 'But why must you destroy the Thals?' he demanded. 'Why can't you live together in peace and share your knowledge?'\n
\nThe Black Dalek turned. 'We will be the rulers here,' it said coldly. 'We will share nothing. We will explode the neutronic bomb.' It spun and spoke to the red Dalek. 'Begin the countdown.'\n
\n'No!' Susan yelled. \n
\nDr Who held his grand-daughter tightly to stop her from trying to interfere. He knew that the Daleks would have no qualms about gunning down a child.\n
\n'Why not choose peace?' he implored again.\n
\nThe Daleks ignored him.\n
\nOn the largest of the control units, a display began to slowly tick down.\n
\n100\n
\n99\n
\n98\n\n

\nCHAPTER TEN\n
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\nCountdown to Armageddon\n
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\nAlydon and the Thals had retreated to the edge of the petrified forest. Alydon saw that his people were frightened, shocked and any number of a hundred other emotions, but one feeling burned deepest in Alydon’s own heart.\n
\nShame.\n
\nHe had run when Dr Who and Susan were captured. Certainly these alien visitors had been involved in the attack to try to recover their property but they had also been trying to save the Thals from being slaughtered in future by the Daleks.\n
\nAnd he had run.\n
\nNot any more. The time for running was over.\n
\n‘The Doctor and his granddaughter have been taken prisoner by the Daleks,’ he roared. ‘Now it is up to us!’\n
\nHis outburst had taken even his beloved Dyoni by surprise, ‘What can we do?’\n
\nAlydon scooped up a fallen branch and slammed it violently into the trunk of a tree. ‘We can fight!’\n
\n \n
\n68\n
\nThe countdown continued in the Dalek control room.\n
\nThe Black Dalek turned from its control panel. ‘The Thals are moving towards the city once more but it does not matter now.’ It paused, as if relishing its next words. ‘In a short time, they will all be dead.’\n
\nDr Who had been thinking desperately, trying to find some way to stop the Daleks from exploding their bomb. He had only one thing left to bargain with. ‘Wait!’ he said. ‘I have something to tell you. You do not know how we came to this planet.’\n
\n‘Grandfather, no,’ Susan protested but the old man ignored her.\n
\n‘I have a machine which is capable of crossing the barriers of time and space,’ he said quickly. ‘I will tell you its secrets if you do not explode the bomb.’\n
\nThe Black Dalek pondered his words for a moment. ‘We do not believe you are capable of creating such a machine.’ Its eye stalk lowered to Susan.\n
\n‘It’s true,’ she agreed reluctantly.\n
\n‘You took a vital part of it from me,’ Dr Who continued quickly. ‘Examine it. You will see that it must belong to some complicated machine.’\n
\nA drone Dalek lifted the fluid link from a work surface where it had been discarded. ‘I have it here.’\n

\nThe countdown continued on the display. \n
\n52\n
\nThe Black Dalek examined the fluid link for a few moments. ‘Where is the machine?’ it demanded.\n
\n‘In the petrified forest outside the city,’ Dr Who answered.\n
\n‘Good,’ the Black Dalek rasped. ‘We will examine it and use it to conquer other planets.’\n
\nDr Who shook his head resolutely. ‘But you could not operate it without me.’\n
\n‘We will find a way,’ the Black Dalek said confidently. ‘Daleks always find a way.’\n
\nDr Who’s shoulders slumped. His gamble had failed.\n
\n43\n
\n42\n
\n41 \n\n
\nAs soon as Ganatus had been returned to their party – and a huge hug from his brother – Ian had insisted that they increase their pace. They had taken far longer to reach the Dalek city than had been expected. The plan had been for his group to infiltrate the city and cause as much damage as possible – preferably to the power systems – before Alydon’s people attacked. Ian knew that his party was behind schedule.\n
\nOne last steep climb brought the four out onto a metal floor. In front of them were thick metal bars, beyond which were the metal corridors of the Dalek city. \n
\nThey had made it.\n
\nAt least they would have made it once they passed the bars which stood in their way. Ian tried to move them to no avail.\n
\n‘How do we get in?’ Barbara said to herself. Without waiting for an answer she began scouting the walls at the side of the bars.\n
\n \n
\n37\n
\n36\n
\n35\n
\nDr Who and Susan watched the numbers slowly tick down. His brain was racing, searching for some way to avert catastrophe. If need be he would throw himself upon the controls and try to damage them. He knew what that would mean for himself and probably for Susan, too, but if there really wasn’t any other option...\n
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\n‘What are you doing?’ Ian asked Barbara. \n
\nShe was running her hand on the angled surface on the far side of the bars. The sharp corners meant that the surface was out of view. ‘They wouldn’t have that opening here unless they want to access it at some point,’ she explained reasonably. ‘That means the bars must be able to move.’\n

\nOn cue, the bars slid quickly up into the roof.\n
\n‘Got it,’ Barbara exclaimed. ‘I knew there had to be a sensor there somewhere.’\n
\nIan grabbed Barbara’s hand and ran into the corridor with Antodus and Ganatus a few steps behind. Ian and Barbara were both aware of the bulbous Dalek cameras high on the walls swivelling to observe their progress.\n
\nIt didn’t matter.\n
\nThe fight for survival was on.\n
\n \n
\n‘Thals in city!’ the Black Dalek screeched suddenly. ‘Thals here. Emergency.’\n
\nA horrific alarm klaxon sounded. Dr Who gripped Susan’s shoulder a little tighter and gave a smile of encouragement. Perhaps they weren’t completely beaten just yet.\n
\n\nIan had led his party through several corridors and had seen the familiar sight of a lift ahead when a Dalek glided round a corner into view ahead of them.\n
\n‘Stay where you are,’ the Dalek shrieked, hurtling towards them. ‘You are trapped.’\n
\n‘Run!’ Ian shouted. \n
\nHis party was already sprinting along the corridor with Barbara at their head. She stopped at an intersection of corridors and did a quick calculation before leading them to the left.\n
\n‘Stay where you are.’ The Dalek sounded like it was getting closer. Ian didn’t look back to check. He trusted Barbara to know what she was doing. ‘You cannot get away. Stay where you are!’\n
\nAnother lift was directly ahead. Somehow Barbara had been able to decipher the layout of the Dalek corridors. She could do that and she still wanted to date him? Ian Chesterton felt a surge of pride as he ran into the lift. Barbara wafted a hand over the sensor and the lift began to rise.\n
\n‘You’re all right, you are,’ he said quietly to Barbara.\n
\nShe gave a slight smile. ‘You’re not so bad yourself.’\n
\n‘Come down! Come down at once!’ The Dalek’s voice screeched from below them. A moment later they all felt the floor begin to grow hotter. They pushed themselves back against the walls of the lift an instant before the centre of the floor erupted in flames. \n
\nThey had been lucky. If the lift had been any closer to the Dalek, the flames would certainly have engulfed them.\n
\nThrough the hole in the lift’s floor they heard the Dalek communicating with its leaders. ‘Prisoners escaping. Reporting to upper level control. Prisoners escaping.’\n\n
\nThe Black Dalek took the report from its guard on the lowest levels of the city personally. This was too important a time to leave anything to chance. The Daleks were about to wipe the Thals from the planet Skaro forever. At last the Thals would all die. Nothing could be allowed to stop that.\n
\n‘Four Thals are moving to control room level,’ the guard reported.\n
\n‘Intercept them,’ the Black Dalek ordered.\n

\n29\n
\nThe Black Dalek turned and moved to another control panel. When it spoke its voice echoed through the entire city. ‘Attention. Four Thals moving to upper control room level. Destroy them.’\n
\n27\n
\n\nIan’s party had emerged from the lift expecting to be met with an army of Daleks. Instead the corridor had been empty. They had made good progress before a Dalek turned into the corridor behind them. ‘Stay where you are.’ Its voice was of a higher pitch and more hysterical than any of the others they had met. It sounded particularly vicious. \n
\nBarbara led them to another lift and they ran in but the lift refused to respond as she waved her hand across the sensor. It seemed that the Daleks had disabled the lifts. The Dalek moved towards them, screeching relentlessly. ‘You cannot get away. You are trapped.’\n
\nIt was close enough to fire. They were done for. Ian turned his back, using his body to shield Barbara. \n
\nThe Dalek didn’t fire. Instead he heard it scream in a surprised voice, ‘Am under attack.’\n
\nHe spun to see a group of Thals, led by Alydon, further back along the corridor. One had lassoed the Dalek, now all four were heaving on the rope, dragging the Dalek backwards and sending it hurtling out of control towards an open lift shaft at the far end of the corridor. The Dalek plunged to its destruction, screaming hate and firing its weapon.\n
\nThe reunion was genuinely warm but brief.\n‘Alydon!’ Antodus exclaimed.\n
\n‘There were no Daleks at the walls,’ he said with some surprise. ‘We came into the city easily.’\n Barbara chewed her lip worriedly. ‘Then there must be a reason they weren’t waiting to repel an attack.’\n
\nIan looked at Alydon. ‘I guess the answer to that is in their control room.’\n
\nAlydon nodded grimly. ‘Then we go to their control room.’\n
\n\n24\n23\n\n
\nMoving through the corridors, more of Alydon’s people joined their leader until they had gathered a force of around fifty Thal men and women.\n
\nAs they neared the control room, Ian led Alydon forward so that the Thal could see the control room properly. Around a dozen Daleks moved around the room or tended to control panels. In the middle of the room, Dr Who and Susan were held in a cone of light. \n
\n‘They’re alive,’ Alydon said softly.\n
\nNot softly enough.\n
\nTwo Daleks turned and moved towards the doorway. Ian and Alydon ran.\n
\nThey sprinted back towards the rest of the Thals but as they reached what looked like heavier blast-proofed doors, Alydon indicated for Ian to hide behind one of the wide, shielded sides of the door frame. Alydon leaped into cover behind the other. They waited, waited, waited...\n
\nThe moment the pincer arms of the Daleks appeared the two men made their move. They

each sprang at the back of the nearest Dalek. The Daleks reacted, firing their weapons indiscriminately. Alydon braced his feet and turned his Dalek. With a roar brought on by a rush of adrenalin, Ian managed to spin his Dalek. Both Daleks, firing their weapons were turned to face each other. Their weapons still firing, the Daleks sent each other to oblivion.\n
\n‘Ian!’ Barbara ran to join them. She and the Thals had been attracted by the sound of fighting.\nThere was no time to celebrate this small victory.\n
\n‘Come on!’ Ian yelled.\n
\nLed by Alydon and these strange new friends, Ian and Barbara, the Thals poured into the Dalek control room. They attacked the Daleks with a brutal ferocity born of desperation. Many of the Thals had picked up metal rods or bars on their way through the city. Now they smashed the Daleks with the plundered weapons. The shells of the Daleks weren’t damaged but the arms and eye stalks were more vulnerable. Gun arms were smashed until they couldn’t fire. Eye stalks were sheared from the Daleks’ domes. \n
\nThe Daleks met the Thal attack with a fury of their own, blasting Thals as they came into range or, if their weapons were damaged, driving their pincers into the throats and bellies of their opponents.\n
\nIt was vicious and brutal. Every combatant knew that it could only end when one side was completely destroyed. Ian and Ganatus found themselves behind a Dalek. Working together they pushed it into a power relay. The explosion tore the top half of the Dalek’s casing apart. Somehow Alydon had managed to get his fingers under the base of a Dalek. In a huge show of strength he toppled it onto its side, stamping down on the gun arm and the eye stalk to incapacitate it.\n
\nBarbara and two Thal women had pulled a Dalek away from some hind of clock showing a countdown. Dr Who saw another Dalek speeding towards his grand-daughter. ‘Barbara! Look behind you!’\n
\nBarbara spun her Dalek. Its gun blasted the approaching Dalek. With the help of the Thal women, Barbara wrenched the gun arm from its socket and hurled the gun away.\n
\nRemoving the Dalek, Barbara had cleared her grandfather’s view of the countdown. \n
\n13\n
\n‘Lad!’ Dr Who shouted in desperation. ‘Stop the countdown!’ He pointed at the panel showing the countdown. ‘The bomb will destroy the planet!’\n
\nIan had no idea how Dalek machinery worked. He didn’t understand the controls. How could he do anything to stop the controls in a room full of Daleks? Daleks. That was the answer. ‘Daleks!’ he bellowed at the top of his voice.\n
\nFour Daleks spun to face him instantly and fired their weapons. Ian threw himself aside, staying low and rolling away. The blast of the Dalek weapons hit the control panel full on. The panel erupted in flames as a chain of small explosions ripped it apart. The explosions spread out among the other panels around the room. Explosions came from other rooms. The floor shook

as explosion after explosion shook the city. The explosions grew louder and closer and the Thals and their human allies threw themselves flat as the explosions returned full circle, tearing most of the panels in the control room apart.\n
\nIt took time for the noise to die and the debris in the air to settle. When it did, Dr Who looked immediately to his youngest grand-daughter. He had been sheltering her with his jacket and his torso. ‘Susie, are you all right?’\n
\nNot surprisingly, Susan’s curiosity took over. ‘What happened?’ she asked, looking around the room.\n
\nBarbara slowly rose to her feet. The Dalek she and Antodus had been struggling with was immobile. Its arms and eye stalk all drooped lifelessly, pointing at the floor. She lifted the eye stalk and released it. The eye fell back down, lifeless. She looked to her grandfather. He was looking around the room in wonder. She tried another Dalek, spinning its dome like a child’s spinning top. It didn’t resist. A third Dalek was equally lifeless as she batted its eye stalk aside.\n
\nDr Who struggled to his feet and met Barbara with a hug. ‘Barbara, I am so proud of you.’\n
\nBarbara indicated the Daleks. ‘They’re all dead.’\n
\nDr Who nodded. ‘Yes. The power overload from the energy shot into that panel fed all through the city, destroying all of their systems, even the power that fed them through the floor. The Daleks are all dead, even the ones sheltering deep inside the city away from the blast. Without electricity they could not survive.’\n
\nIan had also dragged himself to his feet. He was exhilarated but exhausted. As Dr Who and his grand-daughters approached, Ian reached for Barbara’s hand.\n
\nDr Who looked at the number on the countdown and puffed his old cheeks out in relief. The counter had been stopped at 3.\n
\nIan saw the number for the first time and squeezed Barbara’s hand a little tighter. ‘From now on that’s my lucky number.’\n

\nCHAPTER ELEVEN\n
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\nA Beginning and an End\n
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\nSeveral days later, back inside Tardis, Dr Who placed his newly repaired fluid link back into position where its mercury filling sparkled as the ship's lights reflected on it.\n
\n'All set for home,' he said. 'Let's say goodbye to our friends.' He ushered his grand-daughters and Ian towards the door. 'Come along.'\n
\nOutside, hundreds of Thals were waiting to make their farewells. They smiled and said hello as Dr Who led his group towards Alydon.\n
\n'Quite a reception,' Dr Who said with a smile. 'Thank you. It's a great honour.'\n
\nAlydon shook his head. 'You saved our people from the rule of the Daleks. My friends, we do not have much with which to thank you, but we would like you to take these to remember us.'\n
\nDyoni, Ganatus and Antodus came forward, each of them carrying one of the cloaks like the one Alydon had given Susan what seemed like a lifetime ago. Alydon picked one up himself and handed it to Dr Who. The old inventor took it, obviously deeply moved by the generosity of the Thals.\n
\n'How very kind of you,' he said. 'Thank you so much.'\n
\nIan, Barbara and Susan all added their heartfelt thanks.\n Dr Who smiled his warm, kindly-old-gentleman smile. 'We will treasure them.'\n
\n'We will,' Susan added, smiling at Alydon.\n
\nDr Who held out hand and Alydon shook it. The farewell was mirrored as each of Alydon's closest friends and advisers said goodbye to Dr Who's party.\n
\n'Thank you,' Alydon said, 'and if you must go... goodbye.'\n
\nDr Who squeezed Alydon's hand in the handshake. 'Goodbye, my friend.'\n
\nTo a chorus of farewells, Dr Who and his party slowly returned to Tardis, smiling their own farewells at now-familiar faces and precious friends they would never see again.\n
\nBefore entering Tardis, Ian draped his cloak around his shoulders, garnering cheers from a few of the Thals.\n
\n'You'll look pretty funny wearing that in London,' Susan grinned cheekily.\n
\n'Hey!' Ian protested, scowling back at the girl. And then he walked into the door of Tardis.\n
\nSusan couldn't help smirking, and neither could Ian. 'Come on,' Susan said, leading Ian inside and pulling the door closed behind them.\n
\nInside the ship they found Barbara handing her grandfather a comfortable old pair of slippers, which he eased on in place of his carelessly discarded boots. 'Thank you, Barbara, he said. 'And now we will return to our own time and place.'\n
\n'Thank goodness for that,' Ian said. 'This is a date I'm not likely to forget in a hurry, Barbara.'\n

\nBarbara just laughed.\n
\nIan sighed. ‘Going back to the office is going to seem really dull after this.’ The truth was that Ian had no intention of returning to his office – at least not for long. He had always wanted to have his own business but people like him didn’t do that. At least that was what he’d been told. But people like him didn’t travel to alien planets to fight monsters, either.\n
\nNo, Ian Chesterton was going to start his own business all right.\n
\n‘Just push the lever, lad,’ said Dr Who, encouraging Ian to again press the control which would set the ship in motion.\n
\nIan did as he was asked. The whooshing and wheezing sound filled the room, indicating that they were in transit before dying away to nothing as quickly as it had started.\n
\nDr Who pointed at the white painted inner doors. ‘Now if you’ll open the door, you will find we’re back in our own little garden,’ he said confidently. As Ian made for the door, Dr Who turned to his younger grand-daughter. ‘It’s always nice to get home, isn’t it?’\n
\nIan opened the door, looked out and slammed the door shut again. ‘Out there,’ he said. ‘Romans. Thousands of them. They’re...’ He turned to Dr Who. ‘Do something.’\n
\n‘Oh, dear, that’s rather disappointing.’ Dr Who quickly turned another dial and pushed the control, again sending Tardis on a trip through time and space. Ian had no idea where the old man had set the controls to take them – he wasn’t sure that Tardis would obey the instructions anyway - but wherever the craft took them, Ian was sure it certainly wasn’t going to be dull. He felt Barbara’s hand slide into his. If it took a few trips for them to get back home, yes, that was just fine by him.\n
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\nDR WHO will return in\n
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\nDALEKS’ INVASION\n
\nEARTH: 2150AD\n
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\nArriving in the middle of the 22nd Century, Dr Who and his companions are shocked to find that the Earth has been invaded, its cities and continents destroyed and humanity has been brutally subjugated.\n
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\nThe Daleks are now the Masters of the Earth.\n